

AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECT A COURSE IN BIBLICAL
PREACHING HAS ON THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
OF INCARCERATED MEN

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ABSTRACT

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by

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Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail (SEORJ) in Nelsonville, Ohio—a five-county cooperative—is the context for this project. The objective is the facilitation of fundamental spiritual character development based on a multifaceted immersion in, and application of, transformative biblical texts. The hypothesis is: If incarcerated Christians are exposed to biblical texts in a variety of ways, there will be a resulting potential for spiritual growth and character development. Qualitative data triangulation was utilized to validate this case study. Journals, pre and post-test, participant observations, focus group discussion, and in-depth personal interviews were also utilized. The study proved to be successful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must first thank my parents, who gave me my first start at college in the city of Dayton, Ohio, for their support over the course of many years of disappointment and trial—and now, almost 44 years later, they live to witness this final educational achievement in that same city. There were many times during the pursuit of this doctorate when I seriously doubted that the degree would ever be accomplished. I want to thank Chaplain John Butcher, who was especially instrumental in providing the final context for a successfully completed project. A special recognition is owed to my professional prison chaplain associate, Dr. Emmanuel Samuthram—without whom I never would have undertaken this doctoral journey to begin with. Thanks to my prison associate, Chaplain Brian McKinley, who has always been there with practical help and words of admonition and encouragement.

Of course I must give due acknowledgement to my mentors, Drs. William H. Curtis and Gina M. Stewart—world-class exemplars of the great art of preaching and the true calling of ministry. Much gratitude to my peers of the Curtis-Stewart Cohort—especially my peer associate Dr. Derrick Randolph Sr., co-laborer on this doctoral journey.

Lastly; much love and appreciation to my wife Christiane, whose personal sacrifice and patience has been unfailing.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all incarcerated men and women who strive, by the grace of God and the Gospel, to become more like Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

The United States has an inordinately high rate of incarceration—often referred to as the highest in the world. If a stay in prison is no picnic, why do so many come back for a return engagement? One common definition of insanity is "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." The reasons are too complex to address in this work—however, there is an increasing effort by many to awaken from the insanity of the same old prison approaches and seek new solutions. Of course, the most effective solution must be to reach those at risk, before they commit felonies or violate their parole. The question still remains, how do we help those who end up in the vicious cycle of incarceration?

For those who are Christians, the answer is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, it is increasingly evident that much of Gospel-based ministry has marginal results when effecting lasting transformation in the lives of convicted felons. As a full-time state chaplain for the last twenty years, I have worked with a multitude of volunteers, representing a myriad of faith groups. Far and away, the largest representation is found among the Christian denominations. Men who are incarcerated have more opportunities and time to engage in Christian programming and services than they would ever have on the outside.

Unfortunately, the results are often ineffective. Programs can even do more harm than good, leaving men blindsided to their most important spiritual needs. Are some Christian ministries engaging in another form of insanity as well?

The intent of this work is to focus on one of the most important goals of Christian discipleship—the restoration of the image of God (Christ) in men, and a novel (yet highly biblical) approach to facilitating that goal. It is my prayer that this work will spur others to explore similar means of assisting God in transforming those in greatest need.

Chapter one of the study will ground itself within the contemporary context of the prison system in the State of Ohio, while exploring how this particular project was born out of my experiences in correctional chaplaincy ministry. This chapter will give insight into my spiritual autobiography as well as background information on the context and research issues related to religion and its impact on recidivism. Lastly, the synergy between my spiritual autobiography and context will be articulated. It is from this synergy that this project was generated.

Chapter two will explore what the professional community and its various disciplines have to say regarding the foundations of character reformation – a reformation necessary for lasting Christian discipleship and the elimination of recidivism. Dialogue will ensue with those scholars and experts in these respective disciplines to gain a realistic and holistic view of a path forward for inmates who need a transformative experience in order to become productive members of society and God's kingdom. From this research should emerge a methodology for dealing with the most important spiritual concerns of those who endure incarceration.

Chapter three will examine the interdependent theological themes which are of paramount concern for this study - Christian anthropology and soteriology. These subjects will be explored biblically, historically, and theologically so as to derive a correct understanding of the nature of man; and, the human potential for Christian

transformation within the prison context. Old and New Testament scripture will be explored to give evidence of God's gracious will and promise for all who accept Christ as their personal savior.

In chapter four, the research design model will be discussed. The hypothesis will be restated, spelling out exactly how it will be tested in the project.

Chapter five will consist of the actual field experience. It will include the collection and analysis of data and the project outcomes. Chapter five will indicate the effectiveness of the project. Did the project yield the expected results?

The final chapter, chapter six will be set aside for reflection, summary, and conclusion of the project. In this chapter, I will give concluding thoughts on how the project could be built upon and improved.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Background Profile

Twenty years ago I was led providentially to the profession of Correctional Chaplain. Having a multi-varied experience in world religions and philosophies prior to conversion; and, also having an unfortunate experience in the drug culture for thirteen years - I have been uniquely prepared to minister within the confines of a state prison. With the distinct conviction that "but for the grace of God" I could have been incarcerated myself, I found a powerful motivation to reach out to those suffering the burden of imprisonment. Having a shared experience of psychological, physical and spiritual injury, I am in a distinct position to declare to those incarcerated that transformation and healing are indeed possible—having experienced such renewal myself. The paradigm of the wounded healer would certainly here be applicable.

It was at Noble Correctional Institution (NCI) that I would develop my first prison preaching class. This was a risky move, in that prison regulations strictly forbid inmates from preaching in, or leading, worship services. I believed that inmates should be afforded the opportunity to experience the benefits of preaching in a classroom setting, as well as the call to character development and a modified "pastoral formation" within that context. The group critique in a homiletics class would also serve to facilitate character development using the dynamics of a group therapeutic environment.

The end goal was not only to effect instrumental learning, but also transformative learning, as the preaching students were called to examine their own lives and how they conformed to the biblical model of manhood.

A primary model of "preaching as witness" (see: Thomas Long) would be used. From this approach, preaching would be seen as an engagement of the whole life—both speech and action. The famous words attributed to St. Francis would be used as a motto for the preaching experience: "Preach the gospel. Always preach the gospel. If necessary, use words." In the prison context, words are cheap. Often those who are most vocal regarding their faith are the least likely to actually exhibit its precepts. The goal of this class would not be to prepare pastors *per se*, but to prepare Christian disciples and witnesses—always ready to give a reason for the hope that is within them; in word (including formal public proclamation) and, more importantly, deed.

After spending six years at Noble Correctional Institution, I was moved to another prison in the northern part of the state. This was Richland Correctional Institution (RiCI) in Mansfield, Ohio. The first class which I taught to the inmates was on biblical preaching. There was a very enthusiastic response, particularly from the African American inmates. The most gifted student in this class was a former enforcer for the 'Black Gangster Disciples' in Chicago, who had gone through a dramatically powerful conversion experience. Witnessing this former gang member blossom as a preacher during the class experience was very rewarding.

I am currently chaplain over two prisons thirty miles apart, one housing older offenders in Nelsonville, Ohio (average age over sixty-five years), one housing younger offenders in Lancaster, Ohio (average age less than twenty-five years).

Most recently these two prisons were merged, leaving me as the sole full-time chaplain in charge of religious services at both facilities. I originally planned to complete my doctor of ministry work at the Noble Correctional Institution in Caldwell, Ohio, where I planned to transfer. When this transfer did not occur due to departmental downsizing; I then planned to conduct my project at Southeastern Correctional Institution in Lancaster, Ohio. Finally, for reasons that will next be outlined, my work was completed at the Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail in Nelsonville, Ohio.

Change of Context Disclaimer

I entered into this doctoral program with the express purpose of conducting research in the context within which I worked—that being either Noble Correctional Institution (NCI) or Southeastern Correctional Complex (SCC) of the ODRC (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections). All references to either of these two prison facilities in the following portions of this document have since been revised to include a third context outside of the ODRC jurisdiction where I was compelled to finally complete the project in question. The research subjects found in the final jail context are in essence identical to the demographic of persons found within the original prison context. The applications and findings resulting from the final jail context are directly applicable to the originally intended prison context. Furthermore, the project as recorded in the third context was also implemented effectually (without research applications) in the originally intended departmental context.

When first approaching the implementation phase of the program, it was assumed that there would be a review of the proposed project by the Department of Corrections for security and confidentiality purposes. Unfortunately, after passing candidacy review with United Theological Seminary (UTS), I was confronted with the fact that the Department of Corrections had its own review board (The Human Subjects Research Committee HSRC) that set its own set of research standards. This board would subsequently reject my project proposal and prohibit the conducting of said research within the prison context where I am employed—not because of security or confidentiality concerns; but for reasons unforeseen. As a result, I would be forced to seek another context outside of the jurisdiction of the department of corrections, with a similar demographic, within which to conduct the research.

The ODRC has a policy which governs research under its jurisdiction. This policy is called the HSRC policy. After submitting all of the required information in compliance with this policy (including informed consent material etc.) in August of 2014, I was informed that the committee would not be able to review my application until the first week of October 2014. In the meantime, the chairperson in charge of the review committee requested more material that was not outlined in the policy application. My curriculum vitae, copies of project curricula and survey questions were requested. Answers to various further questions were requested—questions such as, "How will transformative learning be measured," "How do you justify your class size from a research perspective?" "Is there any role conflict with you conducting this research?" etc. The committee already knew the answer to this final question.

They would later declare that such an education and work role conflict did exist; thus prohibiting research within my employment context. They would also prohibit such a project to be conducted in my specific context—even on a volunteer basis. The only option they left for the project to hypothetically occur was in a different prison, under a volunteer status.

The HSRC proposed (in essence) to make the proposed project an ODRC project that would advance ODRC goals ("This will provide greater . . . justification for the benefits of completing your project for ODRC"). Even though the HSRC proposed to mold and use the project to advance the mission of the ODRC, they refused to allow me to conduct the project within my specific context. Even though the department had already funded the writers' education with "special leave" for all intensives; allowing me to run the project program "on the clock" was deemed a "role conflict," forcing such activity to be conducted on my own time. Finally, the committee disallowed me from conducting the project as a non-paid volunteer within my own context—stating that (if ever approved in the future) such research would have to be conducted at another institution that would permit me to operate as a volunteer.

I was told that more substantive literary evidence would need to be provided to support the rehabilitative value and potential of reducing recidivism (literature that links spiritual growth to positive behavioral outcomes, such as reduced recidivism, less misbehavior during incarceration, etc.). The department itself primarily compiled the literary material which I provided to the committee—little other literature could be found. The paucity of such evidentiary literature was spoken of in all the references.

The best studies were referred to as "moderate and non-compelling." The constant refrain was, "more research needs to be done on this subject." Nevertheless, the HSRC wanted me to provide more research.

Whereas my project was developed toward an exclusively qualitative measurement—I was now told that I would have to use quantitative measurements, "to meet Departmental Standards." These standards are not outlined in any manual or written guidelines. When I asked where I could find the "Departmental Standards" I was referenced to the HSRC policy which does not mention a quantitative measurement requirement. This policy invests the HSRC to set standards as it sees fit, without a standards manual. When I then made inquiry as to whether the HSRC could provide an example of a previously approved D.Min. project for review, I was informed that the committee had no record of any such project having been approved during their tenure.

Finally, I was told that even if I should comply with all of the HSRC's modifications, no guarantee could be given that the project would ever be approved. "While we cannot provide any promise of final approval, please consider our suggestions, and revise your proposal accordingly."

I felt that (under the previously mentioned circumstances) the labor, time, and risk involved in complying with the HSRC would be too great—possibly jeopardizing completion of the doctorate. As a result (at an ever increasingly late date), I was compelled to find a setting for the project that contained incarcerated (or formerly incarcerated) persons who were not under the jurisdiction of the DR&C or its affiliates—and thereby not subject to the HSRC's mandates and authority. This would insure that the foundational premises and proposals of the project could still be legitimately conducted

and still have application to a prison population—with persons who possessed a virtually identical background and psychology to those incarcerated in a state prison. As it would eventually turn out, the participants found in a new context for the final project would actually be formerly convicted felons who fit the demographic profile perfectly.

Initially, I approached local county jails and their chaplains for a possible venue. Finding no immediate openings, I approached a halfway house for potential subjects. The initial response here was more positive, until it was revealed that probationers and parolees were still technically under the jurisdiction of the DR&C, making it still dependent on HRSC approval. After this impasse, I approached a local church with a significant number of ex-felons who would potentially express an interest in participating in the project. This option also failed to materialize. I also approached "The Refuge" ministry (a thirteen-month multi-phase recovery/employment/discipleship program), also to no avail.

Finally, a jail not yet approached provided an opportunity for the project to be conducted: the Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail or SEORJ), a five-county cooperative facility located in the poorest of all Ohio counties (Athens County, with 32.2% of its population below the poverty line), housing in excess of 200 inmates. Initially there were ten volunteers who responded to an invitation to participate in the research project. This number was reduced to five participants during the first session and then subsequently to three participants by the close of the project. The initial reduction of participants was probably due to the challenges inherent in the program. The second reduction of students was caused by the release of two men from the jail.

By the time the project was complete, the remaining participants did not want the class to end. They convinced me to continue the class on a weekly basis, while also taking on new students who had heard about their positive experience. In a large state prison facility the number of participants would have been considerably larger. It is significant that, once started, no participants dropped out of the program due to a negative experience; neither did any of the men who completed the program have a negative experience. On the contrary, all of the subjects who completed the program testified to having had a positive transformative experience.

I also completed the program within the confines of the originally intended context with a non-research approach. Universally positive anecdotal results from this experience will also be shared in this final document.

Original Context

The original ministry context for this doctor of ministry project has been the Ohio prison system for the last eighteen years. The state of Ohio is considered a highly representative demographic that closely reflects the national demographic. It is often the subject of polls seeking to determine the opinions of Americans-at-large, and is considered a bellwether state—particularly during presidential elections.¹ A comparison between Ohio and national demographics reveals a close parallel in nearly every regard (ex. 12.4% Black as opposed to 13.1% nationally)—excepting the concentration of

¹Humphry University, School of Public Affairs, “Why Ohio, The Numbers Don’t Lie,” accessed November 2013, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cspg/smarterpolitics/2012/06/why_ohio_the_numbers_dont_lie.php.

Hispanic persons, which is significantly less than the national average.² Ohio also has one of the highest percentages of both urban and rural populations of any state.³ The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC, or DR&C) is the fifth largest in the United States. The general recidivism rate for Ohio is considerably less than the national average. Forty-four percent of felons return to prison after three years of release nationwide.⁴ The current recidivism rate for Ohio is 31.2%⁵ (As of the finalization of this document the rate has dropped even lower, to approximately 29%). Even with these favorable statistics, the ORDC has undertaken a systemic restructuring and realignment of programming and resources with the intent of dropping both the prison population and the recidivism rate—while at the same time effecting genuine rehabilitation.

The change taking place in the ODRC is the most systemic since the dramatic changes effected in the wake of the Lucasville riot of 1993. Current legislation seeks to divert more and more of the first time offenders and lesser sentence felons to community corrections and treatment programs, thus reducing the inmate population statewide.⁶ Being employed as a state prison chaplain in five different Ohio prisons over the years in question has had its challenges. These include three large institutions built in the 1990s, and one small and one medium size prison both activated in the early 1980s. Each of

²United States Department of Commerce, accessed November 13, 2013,<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39000.html>.

³Center for Family and Demographic Research, accessed November 2013, <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/cas/file36245.pdf>.

⁴Right on Crime, “A New Report Finds National Recidivism Rates Above 40%,” accessed November 13, 2013, <http://www.rightoncrime.com/2011/04/a-new-pew-report-finds-national-recidivism-rates-are-above-40/>.

⁵Key Recidivism Information, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/Reports/ Recidivism/Key Recidivism Information CY2008.pdf>.

⁶The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2011 Annual Report, accessed November 2013, <http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/Reports/Annual/Annual%20Report%202011.pdf>.

these prisons presented unique challenges, but each was also in many ways very similar. I am currently employed at Southeastern Correctional Complex in Southeastern Ohio; this complex comprises two separate prisons separated by approximately thirty miles distance. The smaller of the two prisons (Hocking Correctional Facility—HCF) is where this writer has worked for the last ten years.⁷ Housing between 400 and 500 elderly inmates with an average age of approximately sixty-three years, this prison has recently been absorbed or "annexed" into the larger medium-security prison (Southeastern Correctional Institution—SCI).⁸ This larger prison as of this writing has an approximate population of 1,500 inmates. The entire Ohio Department of Corrections is undergoing a major restructuring, while these two particular prisons are also going through some of the greatest upheavals of their respective activations.

Before the annexing of HCF by SCI, each of these respective prisons had a single full-time chaplain. Afterward, the chaplain at SCI moved to a different prison leaving the chaplain position empty at SCI. In this case there will be only one chaplain over both prisons—and there will not be a second full-time chaplain hired. The staff and inmate population is experiencing a considerable amount of anxiety and frustration over the issues related to the increased expectations placed upon a reduced staffing—especially at HCF. The consensus is that there was a considerable lack of foresight and planning accompanying this restructuring. The entire top level of administration at HCF was initially abolished, and the administration of SCI placed in charge of a considerably reduced work force at HCF. The treatment staff at HCF will be forced to do a great deal

⁷Ohio Government, Department of Rehabilitation and Development, accessed November 2013, <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/Public/hcf.htm>.

⁸Ibid.

of more with less. As a result of these difficult circumstances, the chaplain at SCI decided to move to prison closer to his residence. In order to complete this project, the Noble Correctional Institution (NCI)—a large medium-security prison—was projected as a potential site to conduct this research.⁹

NCI was originally built to house a maximum capacity of 2,500 inmates. In 2012 gang violence made NCI one of the most violent prisons in the state (most of those violent inmates have now been relocated). The racial proportion is 40% minority.¹⁰ NCI is located in the far southeastern corner of Ohio, which is officially considered to be a portion of Appalachia. Over the last sixteen years the percentage of minorities in Noble County has risen from none to approximately 2.7%.¹¹ Rarely if ever will minorities be seen in Caldwell, or its surrounding county, since no African Americans reside there. Since the prison's inception the inmate population has become increasingly white, as those committing felonies with longer sentences in surrounding Appalachian counties are transferred to NCI to get closer to home and family.

A review of the religious makeup of NCI reveals a demographic that closely parallels the national religious demographic (the list of religious preferences is only accessible by departmental employees and is subject to constant change). In the Pew Forum Religious Landscape Survey of 2008, 28% of the population left the religion of their youth or have no religious preference at all.¹² “The Midwest most closely resembles

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹United States Census, Noble County Ohio, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39/39121.html>.

¹²The Pew Forum, US Landscape Survey, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report2-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>.

the religious makeup of the overall population,”¹³ according to the survey. At NCI, 25% of the inmate population (as of January 2012) have no religious preference or choose not to comment. Seventy percent of the population identify themselves with some form of Christianity. A remaining 5% identify themselves with other religious traditions. During any given Sunday worship hour, the average attendance ranges from eighty to 150 maximum participants. Approximately fifty Christian inmates may participate in other Christian programs, but do not participate in Sunday worship. A conservative estimate of professing Christian participants prison-wide would be approximately 7.6% of the general population. If at least 1,900 inmates at NCI profess some form of Christianity, but only 200 participate in religious activities, this represents a significantly lesser percentage of active Christian participation than the national average.¹⁴ At SCI and HCF, the attendance averages between sixty to seventy-five years; the proportion of minorities is slightly greater at SCI. NCI or SCI (population 1,600) are the prison congregations that will potentially constitute the context for the doctor of ministry project.

Though a chaplain’s work entails a very diverse interfaith ministry, representing the full gamut of religious persuasions (those known, lesser known, and unknown), most chaplains are actively engaged with Christian inmates during the larger portion of their working hours.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴OrthodoxyToday.org, How Many Americans Really Attend Church Each Week? Accessed November 23, 2013, <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles5/TaylorChurch.php>.

There are a variety of volunteer ministries that are active in the prison context. These groups engage in teaching, preaching, and group discussion activities with emphases ranging from the salvation of inmates, to recovery and discipleship. The chaplain is often more closely involved in helping incarcerated Christians develop and maintain a healthy discipleship and interpersonal relationships.

The prison environment is somewhat artificially diverse. It has been said that the hour of Sunday worship in the free society of America is the most segregated hour (this would also include denominational segregation as well as racial and ethnic). In some ways, those same hours in the prison context are the least segregated. Often the congregational demographic is very diverse racially and denominationally. In any given prison worship you may have Catholics, Protestants of every type, Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, inner-city, rural, illiterate, advanced degrees, blue collar, white collar, homosexual and heterosexual—worshipping in the same service and living together in the same dormitory quarters.

The theological and spiritual ethos of NCI & SCI (as well as most prisons in Ohio) is heavily fundamentalist. The inmates attending Protestant services represent a relatively diverse denominational demographic (heavily Baptist and Pentecostal, including some Catholics). A large percentage of those who decide to participate in Christian programming gravitate toward the faith of their parents—even though they themselves may have never been previously incorporated into that faith. As a result, you have a percentage of practicing Christians in prison who have a primarily biological faith, rather than an integrated one.

Most of those inmates attending Protestant Christian activities adopt a Bible-believing and born-again stance. As with any congregation (inside or outside the fence) you will find those who are sincere pursuers of God, or, on the other hand, those who hypocritically maintain a Christian facade. You will find those who are compensating for traumatic family of origin issues, as well as those who are swinging an 'extremist pendulum,' away from their former life of sin toward legalism. Many seek refuge in a fellowship that upholds a degree of sanctity, while harboring unhallowed propensities within. All of the facets represented by the sinful persona of mankind can be manifest in the microcosm prison congregation.

There are certain common personality types and issues that are almost universal to this context. Since the prison confines criminals (some of those who are incarcerated are actually innocent), a significant number of these have clinically defined criminal personalities. Contrary to society's popularized view, not all criminals have criminal personalities.¹⁵ It has become increasingly obvious as well, that not all of those incarcerated are guilty of the crimes for which they are doing time.¹⁶

Many of those incarcerated can be realistically viewed as an oppressed underclass unable to afford sound counsel, forced to cop a plea—only to find themselves the victims of a corrupt judicial system skewed toward securing convictions by any means possible and keeping felons incarcerated as long as possible. Once incarcerated, they can find themselves in a repressive environment where correctional officers can be arbitrary,

¹⁵Donald Black, "Antisocial Personality Disorder in Incarcerated Offenders: Psychiatric Comorbidity and Quality of Life." *Annals of Clinical Psychiatry* vol.22 no.2 (2010): 113-120.

¹⁶Jim Petro, *False Justice: Eight Myths that Convict the Innocent* (New York, NY: Kaplan Publishing, 2011).

dehumanizing, and abusive. Inmates and security staff often divide along *us versus them* lines that view each opposing side as suspect. Correctional officers often, but certainly not always, treat inmates as sub-humans to be viewed as guilty and untrustworthy in every circumstance.

Those who actually possess criminal personality types (make no mistake, they are numerous) can range anywhere from mildly narcissistic to full-blown psychopathic (lacking a fully functioning conscience).¹⁷ In general, there is a tendency toward egocentrism, immediate gratification, and limited self-awareness. If a major process (and goal) of transformative learning is critical self-reflection, then this population constitutes one of the most difficult challenges for any educator.

One of the stated goals of incarceration in Ohio is rehabilitation. The Ohio department is one of only two state prison systems that actually contain the word rehabilitation in its name (the other being North Dakota). Rehabilitation has a significantly different definition and end goal when viewed from the Christian perspective as opposed to the goals of secular state government, legislative bodies, or the taxpayers at large. Christian ministry should have the spiritual renovation of persons as its primary goal. Though ministry is also concerned with the civic, moral, vocational, social, and psycho-physiological facets of the human experience—soul rehabilitation is of paramount importance. It can be claimed that full and lasting rehabilitation can never take place without this fundamental facet of personal transformation. When it comes to the more intransigent personality deficits represented by an incarcerated population, a miracle of divine intervention is essential.

¹⁷Black, *Antisocial Personality Disorder in Incarcerated Offenders*, 113-120.

Since the prison population is often disenfranchised, denigrated, oppressed, and dis-empowered, the path to individualism and self-direction is severely hindered by the correctional environment. Those who seek individual transformation are often threatened and pushed back into their place by staff and inmate alike. In many ways the best inmate is one who is not seen or heard. When they become vocal, or advocate for constructive change, they become a threatening blip on the security radar screen—an annoyance, or even threat to security personnel and the prison culture. One of the greatest myths of society and the criminal justice system is that convicted felons are incapable of fundamental change, or of becoming responsible members of society. The system perpetuates this myth during their incarceration. Rarely are they afforded opportunities to exercise responsibility in preparing to re-enter society. One of the express purposes of this doctor of ministry project is the engendering and empowering of inmates with a positive self-image (many have been made to believe a self-destructive self-fulfilling prophecy of failure all their lives) and a spiritual calling and purpose in life.

The majority Protestant denominations, as previously mentioned, are Baptist and Pentecostal. One or more of these persuasions tend to predominate, depending on the influence and leadership of the chaplain and/or administration of the prison. Pentecostal inmates can become peculiarly problematic when left unchecked or given inordinately preferential treatment.

While inmates in this project approach will be invested with more individual autonomy, Pentecostalism (with its accompanying individualism) can present a unique pitfall for the narcissistic personality type. An inmate may decide that because he has been invested with ‘power from on high,’ he may be immune to, or ignorant of, the character deficits that a more thorough self-examination would reveal.

Often the religious emphasis becomes almost entirely focused on what God gives the believer (especially sign gifts), as opposed to what God can make the believer (fruits of the Spirit or character development). Some inmates will even pronounce that they are now fully sanctified and incapable of sinning. Others with addictive personalities may trade a physical addiction for a religious one—seeking a spiritual/emotional high to fill the place of prior drug and alcohol dependency. Those who are convinced they have a ‘hotline to God’ may use their newfound religious status to reject the direction offered by correctional professionals (the chaplain included). In this context an antisocial form of Christianity may develop. Also, inmates may develop a holier-than-thou approach to their faith experience. They may seek to remain aloof from the body of Christians at large, pronouncing themselves to be different than all the hypocrites in the church.

This is fundamentally no different from similar pronouncements in churches on the street—but takes on a distinctly onerous quality when manifest in the prison environment—where everyone is reduced to the common denominator of incarceration and all that it entails. This type of approach (just as outside the confines of prison) only serves to keep God at arm’s length while distancing oneself from God’s confessedly imperfect body.

The humbling experience of incarceration should be a great leveler, helping each fellow felon to feel the brunt of their common humanity, standing before God, and need of a Savior. There are few such places where class, education, social status, race, and professional accomplishments begin to lose their meaning.

The prison church is in many ways a microcosm of the church outside. Though it may be more diverse; in many ways it contains the same persons one would find in the free part of society. Granted, they may have a more exacerbated case of what ails us all—yet, they still must be afforded the right to avail themselves of the spiritual remedies available to those living in free society. The ironic reality is that individuals often have more of those opportunities in prison than those on the outside fighting the battles of life. The goal of this work is to develop a specific prison-programming model that will have a lasting transformative effect in the lives of those impacted through that experience. Though there are still very few statistical studies to support the rehabilitative efficacy of Christian programming in the prison context, the evidence is not lacking.¹⁸

Original Synergy

The prison context in Ohio comprises disenfranchised persons who are often exiled not only from society, but from the church as well. Those who have committed crimes can be both victimizers and victims at the same time. Victims of a criminal justice system skewed toward conviction at any cost. Victims of lawyers ill equipped or motivated to help them—particularly when they are poor. They are often victims of formative environments that compound their personality deficits; or victims of inherited

¹⁸Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, “Best Practices Toolkit: Faith-based Programming, Reentry, Recidivism,” accessed November 2013, https://kb.osu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/1811/30146/Tool_Kit_Faith_Programming_Reentry_Recidivism.pdf?sequence=2.

tendencies toward addiction and mental illnesses. Victims of numerous losses suffered through abandonment, divorce, and death. However, the very nature of their incarceration indicates that these various limitations do not absolve them of personal responsibility for their poor choices and criminal actions. The rehabilitative aspect of incarceration, at least in theory, is supposed to direct their thinking and acting capabilities in a responsible, healthy, and productive direction. Faith-based programming plays a major role in helping inmates stay on a rehabilitative track.

A significant percentage of inmates also possess what would be described clinically as Anti-social Personality Disorder ‘ASPD’ (one limited Iowan study showing as high as 35%); a personality disorder that the psychological community views as incurable and only able to be modified, moderated, or minimized in its effects. The incidence of ASPD is highest in the correctional setting, more so than the psychiatric. It often results in psychological and social impairment, drug abuse, violence, and even suicide. Behaviors prevalent in the prison setting often include manipulation, immediate gratification, and oppositional defiance to authority, blaming, and denial. By the very nature of their profession, Christian chaplains are called to minister to this segment of the prison population with redemptive hope.

At NCI (one of the projected prisons for the doctor of ministry project) 25% of the inmate population (as of January 2012) have no religious preference or choose not to comment. Of the identified population, 70% align themselves with some form of Christianity. A remaining 5% identify themselves with other religious traditions. During any given Sunday worship hour, the average attendance ranges from eighty to 150 participants at NCI. A conservative estimate of professing Christian participants prison-

wide would be approximately 7.6% of the general population. At SCI (the other potential project prison) the attendance averages sixty to seventy-five. The proportion of minorities in both projected prisons is in the forty to fifty percentile range.

As a protestant chaplain I am actively engaged with Christian inmates during the larger portion of the eight-hour working shift. The chaplain is often closely involved in helping incarcerated Christians develop and maintain a commitment to personal discipleship; as well as healthy interpersonal relationships with those outside and inside the fence. Inmates who attend chapel services fit a variety of profiles. Whether they are aware of it or not, inmates attracted to active participation in Christian worship and programming are seeking acceptance, and healing.

When examining my own journey toward healing and salvation, there are numerous touch-points with the common biography of prisoners. I made a very diverse exploration of non-Christian religions and Christian denominations; including experience in non-Christian activities and thinking systems—some of them amoral or antisocial. I also delved deeply into unhealthful and unethical practices. I likewise suffered trauma during childhood, dysfunctional formative relationships—as well as serious psychosocial difficulties resulting from unhealthy pursuits. Finally, I was eventually delivered dramatically into the kingdom of Christ as a ‘brand plucked from the fire.’ One of the few things I did not share in common with many prisoners was felony conviction and resulting incarceration—though, but for the grace of God, this would also have been a commonality.

These shared experiences are primarily negative ones. They have left spiritual, emotional, and physical scars. At one time or another I viewed himself as a hopeless case, or was viewed so by others. Are these parallel experiences as severe as with some convicted felons? Certainly not. Are they more severe than some? Yes. The prominent observation is that they are providentially harmonic and plainly evident. The important thing is that all of the above experiences uniquely helped to prepare me to minister in this specific context, with these specific persons.

The incarcerated residents of the prisons where I work are in need of life-long spiritual recovery, and so am I. The paradigm of the wounded healer would certainly be applicable. Though this journey has empowered me to become a ‘wounded healer’ helping many find their hope in God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ—there is still a significant transformative work that needs to be done with the population served and the one who serves. What will I accomplish in the final days of my life and career that will make a difference for me, and those I minister to? The doctor of ministry project will hopefully be a partial response to this question.

The synergy takes place on a deeply personal level. The adult educator is also adult learner—and so it is within this context as well. Are there still character deficits and qualities within me that are in need of reformation? Yes. Is the doctor of ministry process a call to a more thorough healing and transformative rehabilitation within both teacher and student; minister and ministered to? Yes.

The context for this proposed project, by its very nature, demands a rehabilitative purpose and goal. The virtual *raison d'être* for the correctional chaplain is to prepare inmates to be productive members of society and the faith community—without re-offending. What is the most significant issue within the large medium-security adult prison context then? Many would agree—*intrinsic transformation*. True rehabilitation; and the hope for humanity as well, lies within the human heart, mind, and will. Christianity addresses these root issues, as does no other intervention. The greatest insurance against recidivism is an internal transformation, not more stringent external measures. It is a universal adage that human beings change only when they want to; and true change comes from within. There is no guarantee that Christian interventions in the prison setting will always work. There is still no broad-based substantive research that proves Christian interventions in the prison context to be the most successful. This is one necessary result of this work; to further substantiate and confirm through action research the conclusions previously drawn by faith and observation.

The most telling point of convergence between my own strengths and deficits, and those of my contextual congregation, is a universal need and goal—the development of a Christ-like character through a spiritual and biblical intervention. There are a variety of ways in which I have sought to affect this goal with greater or lesser success, with greater or lesser intentionality, in the past. The challenge will be to develop a model that with laser-like accuracy helps to facilitate this most fundamental and essential transformation.

The primary strengths I bring to this doctor of ministry project are preaching and teaching. How have these strengths been best applied and adapted in the prison context? The one project that shows the most promise for effectively utilizing these strengths is a biblical preaching training course. This course would not be restricted to the traditional approach of teaching homiletics. Prison is not the venue for training ministers *per se*. The church does not need convicted felons launched into its midst proclaiming themselves to be pulpit worthy, while at the same time retaining many of the character flaws that led to their incarceration.

This proposed project would focus more so upon what it means to walk the talk. The philosophical and theological approach to preaching would be a very broad one. 'Preaching as Witness' would be a dominant motif. All disciples are called to preach the gospel and to witness to their faith. The saying erroneously attributed to St. Francis (yet still very applicable to the prison context) is: "Preach the gospel, always preach the gospel. If necessary, use words" is appropriate here as well.

Prisoners have the distinct opportunity to observe the personal lives of church-going professors of the Christian faith, as to whether their profession matches their daily living. There is a unique advantage to use the power of the group to call individuals to bring their lives into harmony with their profession. Often it takes a con to recognize and 'call out' a con. The crucible of the preaching event, and the peer critique which follows, can be a humbling, and also a singular moment for learning. Couple this with an intentional focus on the preparation of the preacher, rather than the sermon—and there should be significant progress toward transformative character development.

The focus might naturally be to emulate both Jesus' character, and His preaching methods, with this approach. However, since the goal of this program is the transformation of the prospective preacher, the method of preaching should be decidedly more biblical in its emphasis, i.e., expository. Most specifically to allow the text to impact the preacher directly; not only providing the basis for what is preached, but more importantly, how the preacher will respond and live. As a result, a large pool of texts could be provided which have not only sermonic potential—but also primarily transformative potential, for both the audience and the preacher.

Either Christ is the remedy for what afflicts humanity, or He is not. If He is, then the prescriptions set forth in the Christian scriptures are of paramount importance to be adapted in the diverse human contexts—especially with persons who exhibit such dramatic brokenness as is often found in prison. Previous studies seem to support the fact that Bible-based interventions have some statistical validity in reducing recidivism.¹⁹ The real question that arises out of previous research is: Were the inmate participants already prime candidates for healthy reintegration into society and the church when they entered the programming in question, or did they experience fundamental changes as a result of their exposure to the programming? This project may also play a part in answering this question.

¹⁹Byron Johnson, "Religious Programs, Institutional Adjustment, and Recidivism among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs," *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 14 no. 1 (1997): 1-17.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

The purpose of Christian rehabilitative prison ministry (the venue for this project) is the restoration of men to a right relationship with God and their fellow man. The only way for this to substantively and realistically happen is if an accompanying internal transformation occurs within the individuals involved. Spiritual maturation and Christian character formation are an essential part of the salvation process, as well as the rehabilitative process. “More specifically, sanctification involves the growth and transformation of oneself and one’s character toward a partially determinate picture of the human good or end It involves a life ever more in conformity with Christ . . . the dominant image is “likeness to Christ.”²⁰

The restoration and renewal of the image of God in man constitutes, to a large extent, the goal of salvation itself. The threefold aspects of soteriology (justification, sanctification, glorification) all work toward this end—the restoration of what was lost due to the Fall. John Wesley says of justification and sanctification: “The one restores us to the favor, the other to the image of God (*imago dei*).²¹

John Calvin likewise comments on justification and sanctification. He implies that the end goal of the salvation process is integrity and purity of life.

²⁰Joseph Kotva Jr, *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996), 73.

²¹Harold Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 84-85.

“The whole may be summed up . . . first, being reconciled by the righteousness of Christ, God becomes instead of judge an indulgent Father; and, secondly, being sanctified by His Spirit, we aspire to integrity and purity of life.”²²

At the center of the Christian’s belief about what God has done for him is the affirmation of the change that makes in the believer; a change that not only re-orientates his understanding of his existence, but a change that makes for a radical reorientation of his character and conduct. So understood, the Gospel concerns not merely how we ought to understand ourselves but also how we ought to live and order our being. The Gospel is not only a gift bestowed but a task to be undertaken and worked out in and through every aspect of our life.²³

It has been previously proposed that a fundamental essence of God’s image in mankind is a moral essence—finding its source in God’s own righteous character. One proposed means for facilitating a moral metamorphosis in Christians who still partially bear this image is scripture-engaged, spirit-empowered, and transformative learning. The end goal of Christian transformative learning is transformation according to the image of Christ. The fundamental need of humanity is Christ. Anthropology and soteriology are by their very nature Christological and Christocentric. Consequently, the goal of salvation is essentially the restoration of the image of Christ in mankind.

Several questions arise naturally from these stated spiritual goals in the fields of neurobiology, psychology, and ethics. What comprises the moral attributes and capabilities of mankind? Are these constituents capable of change, and to what degree? If so, how can change best be facilitated? How does such fundamental transformation apply to the rehabilitative context?

²²John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), 3.

²³Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 183.

Since critical self-reflection, self-awareness, and moral maturity are central to the transformative learning process—how can a segment of society that is known for egocentrism and arrested development experience the emancipatory self-knowledge prerequisite to such transformative learning?

Let us proceed by examining some of the neurobiological, psychological, and theological implications of these issues. There has been an increasing approach to Christian anthropology from a monistic perspective, rather than a dualistic one. There is substantial consensus that the Old Testament writers held a monistic view of the nature of man. H. Wheeler Robinson summarizes the matter when he states: "The Hebrew conceived man as animated body and not incarnated soul."²⁴ "Soul is not for the Genesis story a unique characteristic of the human person; humans are not distinctively *human* on account of their purported possession of a soul. Indeed, one might better translate Genesis 2:7 with reference to the divine gift of life: "the human being became fully alive."²⁵

The findings of neuroscience have helped to advance a monistic view of human nature and personality. Neurobiology now understands the higher functions of mind as interdependent with brain function—instead of emanating specifically from an immaterial soul. A brief examination of the material/physical workings of the brain would be helpful here:

The basic building block in neurology is the synapse. At the nerve ending, electrical impulses are converted into packets of chemical neurotransmitter molecules which are released at the nerve terminal, cross the synaptic cleft and attach to receptors on the target nerve (or muscle) cell, where their effect may be re-translated into an electrical impulse. A recipient nerve cell has many nerve

²⁴Martin Tate, "The Comprehensive Nature of Salvation in Biblical Perspective." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 23 (1999): 3.

²⁵Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 64.

endings targeting it. These nerve endings contain neurotransmitters with different chemical structures. These can modulate the response of the receptors, or the response of the cell to receptor activation. Most drugs acting on the central nervous system are believed to work on altering receptor responses to neurotransmitters. There are hundreds of nerve synapses abutting dendrites and nerve cells, modulating the impact of nerve impulses. These networks are arranged into maps and systems. Specific neurological functions are understood to occur at specific locations. This is confirmed by studying patients who have specific neurological deficits who are found, initially at autopsy and now with brain scanning, to have defects in defined regions in the brain As a result, we have maps of the brain showing where different functions are located. We have the coordination area in the cerebellum, vision in the occipital cortex, sensation in the parietal cortex, movement in the motor area, and so on.²⁶

We now know that aspects of personality and character are also directly related to neurobiology. The inhumane experiments of Walter Freeman, and the dramatic effects on personality resulting from lobotomies, are a dramatic case in point. The effects of Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative illnesses also produce dramatic personality changes. Likewise, traumatic brain injuries have on occasion resulted in Jekyll & Hyde personality changes. "Lesions to the orbitofrontal cortex in childhood have been shown to lead to analogous, lifelong social and moral behavioral problems resistant to corrective interventions."²⁷

Impairment in the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex—most specifically the white matter connecting the two, has been associated with psychopathy. One of the earliest and most famous of documented examples of cortex trauma leading to a psychopathic type of personality change was the case of Phineas Gage. Dr. J. M. Harlow's account reads as follows:

²⁶Alan Gijsbers, "The Dialogue Between Neuroscience and Theology," *Conference on Science and Christianity COSAC2003* (2003).

²⁷Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, 83.

Before the accident he had been their most capable and efficient foreman, one with a well-balanced mind, and who was looked on as a shrewd, smart businessman. He was now, Harlow said, fitful, irreverent, and grossly profane, showing little deference for his fellows. He was also impatient and obstinate, yet capricious and vacillating, unable to settle on any of the plans he devised for future action. His friends said he was no longer Gage.²⁸

It is difficult to dispute that the thing we refer to as the self is inextricably related to the biology of the brain. One could even hazard a guess that much of what makes us human, and morally upright, is found in the frontal cortex of our brains. “In short, from birth, we are in the process of becoming, and this becoming is encoded in our brains by means of synaptic activity as both nature and nurture yield the same effect—namely, sculpting the brain (and thus shaping the mind) in ways that form and reform the developing self.”²⁹

The temptation resulting from the discoveries of modern neuroscience is to adopt a purely reductionist approach to human thought and personality. “Indeed, the most basic and significant contribution of cognitive science is its irreducible emphasis on the somatic basis of human existence, including the exercise of the mind.”³⁰

A most extreme example of materialistic reductionism is expressed by Francis Crick: “You, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.” In short: “You’re nothing but a pack of neurons.”³¹

²⁸ Harlow, John. *Recovery from the Passage of an Iron Bar through the Head*. Boston, Massachusetts: David Clapp & Son, 1869. 13-14.

²⁹Ibid., 85.

³⁰Ibid., 75, 84.

³¹Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), 3, 11.

It is obvious that mankind is more material than theologians steeped in traditional dualism have previously envisioned. It is not only science that contributes to this startling conclusion. Definitive biblical pronouncements are also applicable: “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”³²

The clear implication is that Adam was created a divinely animated, material being (Gn 2:7), capable of returning to the materiality from which he was derived. Though Adam and Eve were made in the image of God—apparently inherent immortality was not one of the attributes they possessed (this was an attribute reserved for God that they were later tempted to possess—see Gn 3:4). They were created to live forever, but this did not prohibit their becoming mortal (subject to death) as a result of disobedience (Gn 3:22 - 23). Immortality was, and still remains, a gift (Rom 6:23) given to humans from the Creator, who is the only one inherently immortal. “He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, *who alone possesses immortality . . .*”³³

“In the Gospels, Jesus is pictured as sharing the Hebrew notion of resurrection, rather than the notion of an immortal soul (e.g., Jn 11:23–25; cf. Mk 12:18–27). Indeed, the word immortal does not appear in the Gospels.”³⁴

³²Gn 3:19.

³³1 Ti 6:15–16.

³⁴A. Y. Collins, M. A. Powell, ed. *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (Revised and Updated)* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2011), s.v. “immortality.”

Though humans may be fundamentally material beings; there are immaterial attributes that they possess. These are included within the expression "imago dei." To a large degree they constitute the uniquely god-like aspects represented by that concept. Moral character, self and personality, mind and free agency, the capacity for love and relationship—these qualities are virtually impossible to reduce to purely biological processes.

The most obvious point is that the mind and the body are inextricably intertwined. Most people, even with different mind-brain models, agree to holism. At one end of the spectrum there are some neuroscientists who advocate reductionism. They contend that mind-properties are ultimately brain properties and will be reduced to neuronal function. They call for the abandonment of concepts like the soul and the abandonment of dualism. There are an influential body of Christian thinkers, both scientists and theologians who embrace holism and reject dualism. Others feel called to defend what they see as the traditional (dualistic) view. The debate continues. This has led to a plethora of positions on mind-brain relations Holism with its emphasis on the unity of mind and brain does not preclude that there is a difference between mind and brain Although there is an acceptance of holism, there is also still a distinction between the various aspects of a person's composition Most embrace a form of body-soul holism. The difference is in accepting or rejecting an ongoing disembodied existence beyond death.³⁵

The scientific and theological debate over the nature of humanity focuses not only on the personality and self—but on the subject of the human will. If we are but a conglomerate of chemical constituents at the whim of the predetermined forces of nature, can we be held accountable for our decisions and actions—indeed, is the concept of the human will even based in reality?

³⁵Alan Gijsbers, "The Dialogue Between Neuroscience and Theology," *Conference on Science and Christianity COSAC2003* (2003).

Clarence Darrow, as far back as 1924, arguing for the defense in the famous Leopold and Loeb murder trial, stated that human behavior was based more on external forces than a so-called free moral choice. Contrary to this materialistic view, Scripture supports the concept of free agency and free will in a variety of ways.

“For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach . . . I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants . . .”³⁶ (Dt 30:11, 19).

Human experience also supports this concept. Humanity has such a strong conviction in this regard that they hold persons responsible for their choices and resulting actions from an early age. They will even deign to incarcerate them for life for their actions in facilities like the one in which this writer is employed.

Behaviorists explain behavior as one event related to another event. This would mean that all human behavior is derived from previous external events, or subconscious causes. "Our traditional understanding of responsibility for sin is collocated with affirmations of free will. Conscious intent and personal culpability are typically conjoined. If, as cognitive science urges, thought and intent are embodied, most of our thought occurs at a subconscious level, and our behavior is generated pre-consciously, do the findings of the cognitive sciences not stand in tension with traditional views of freedom and sin?"³⁷

³⁶Dt 30:19.

³⁷Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, 87.

A purely materialistic, reductionist view of the nature of man is not helpful to our discussion. It is thoroughly contrary to the biblical revelation and the plan of salvation—as well as the dictates of common sense. As I was writing this sentence, I decided to take a can of air, and spray it in my own face (having never engaged in such an act previously). Was this a result of pre-determined causes, and subconsciously determined compulsions? No, I chose to engage in this random act as a form of proof that humans do indeed possess the capability of making self-generated, free-agent decisions. This is something we all prove to ourselves a multitude of times every day. “This, we shall see, does not mean that as an agent I am an undetermined power; it is to say that as the cause of my act nothing further is needed to explain the act’s existence beyond the fact that I am the agent of it.”³⁸ “There is, however, no need to posit a cause of man’s actions. Men simply have the ability to act; no further explanation is necessary. To be a man is to have the power of efficient causation.”³⁹ It can be argued that the power of efficient causation otherwise referred to as free will is one of the fundamental characteristics of the image of God in mankind. Man possesses not only the power to procreate, for instance, but also the power to choose to procreate. Though this god-like capacity has been greatly diminished and depraved through the ravages of sin, though it is deeply determined by nature and nurture—there still remains a weak, but operative power to choose. This may be regarded as a highly significant component of the *imago dei*.

³⁸Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 88.

³⁹Ibid., 26.

This biblical concept of imago dei is at the heart of the belief that there is more to humanity than a collection of meaningless molecules. “So we can trace the rising aspiration of humans for better, more adequate structures, their rushing toward meaning and love. And we can contemplate the probability that it is the intrinsic image of God’s appetite for love and justice that we are observing.”⁴⁰

“The human capacity to transcend the self, to stand outside and to reflect on one’s existence and its meaning, may well be rooted in the image of God feature of creation. Self-awareness in this sense constitutes a rare dimension of relational capacity: reflection, evaluation, judgment rooted in this ability to do formal operational thinking. Every person, therefore, must live and move and contemplate reality in relationship with the self.”⁴¹

From a spiritual perspective, this vestigial power (crippled by sin) is powerless to choose moral and spiritual good—without divine intervention to empower the helpless human agent. Fallen man may freely choose God, but only God can instill the power to choose and act for righteous ends, for righteous reasons. More often than not, even man’s best attempts at righteous choices are still tainted with selfishness and a fallen ego.

⁴⁰Donald M Joy, *Moral Development Foundations: Judeo-Christian Alternatives to Piaget /Kohlberg* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983), 24.

⁴¹Ibid., 18.

"Who is able to think one good thought, or to form one good desire, unless by that almighty power which worketh in us both to will and do his good pleasure? We have need, even in this state of grace, to be thoroughly and continually penetrated with a sense of this. Otherwise we shall be in perpetual danger of robbing God of his honor, by glorying in something we have received as though we had not received it."⁴²

"The freedom discovered in grace involves more than freedom among choices; it involves freedom to become a certain kind of person through our choices and actions."⁴³ "Thus theological anthropology sees the human person as neither completely determined nor completely free."⁴⁴

Human beings were essentially created to be free moral agents, capable of decisions and actions reflecting those of their Creator. More importantly, they were meant to possess in their very beings (*imago enti*), the attributes of a Christ-like character—from which these decisions and actions would naturally proceed. We have hereby determined that human beings are free agents, capable of making free choices. The question that remains is, are they capable of developing a moral character—even one similar to the one humanity possessed at creation? These principles would fall into the soteriological category of sanctification. Though the evidence supports the concept; that much of what makes us who we are as individuals becomes static after our formative years, neurobiology confirms that adult change is still possible.

⁴²Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 157.

⁴³Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics*, 91.

⁴⁴Ibid., 91.

Although early development of the cerebral cortex is largely genetically determined, environmental factors are key in the newborn and continue their influence throughout an individual's life. This is partially due to neurogenesis, which persists even in adults, but is especially realized in the generation and pruning of synapses, those points of communication among the cells of the brain. In this way, formative influences are encoded in the synapses of the central nervous system. Hence, although our genes bias our predispositions and character, the neuronal systems, and pathways responsible for much of what we think, feel, believe, and do, are shaped by learning.

For our purposes, this "learning is particularly focused on the practices that shape our lives and on the interpersonal experiences, which directly shape the ongoing development of the brain's structure and function. If the neurobiological systems that shape how we think, feel, believe, and behave are forever being sculpted in the context of our social experiences, then in a profound sense we must speak of personal (trans)formation in relational terms."⁴⁵

Transformative change, precipitated by learning in the brain, is also made possible through neuroplasticity. Originally the brain was understood to be virtually immutable prior to adulthood. Now it is widely recognized that the brain remains plastic well into adulthood, and is capable of transformation resulting in neuronal change.

Let us now turn our attention to the subject of morality, and virtue ethics (or character) in specific. This is one of the immaterial aspects of human experience that has often been relegated to the realm of theology and philosophy—though there is a more recent scientific and psychological interest in the subject. Character is at the very heart of the imago dei and constitutes much of what could be considered the imago entis.

⁴⁵Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, 115, 116.

In other words, when we are speaking of the restoration and renewal of the imago dei, we are to a large extent speaking about moral character. Consequently, we agree with Wesley's analysis of the imago dei as being composed primarily of moral attributes and a transformed moral character.

It is clear from what has been said that to Wesley perfection is not only perfection in actual acts; it embraces the whole disposition which lies behind them as well, the soul with all its tempers. He sees perfection in obedience too, but this is an expression of the inward perfection of the individual personality or character . . . Thus to Wesley perfection means the perfected and harmonious personality.⁴⁶

“Whatever else the creation narrative may mean by image of God, it is moral sentience that sets humans apart from everything else that breathes—an intrinsic core of sensitivity to justice”⁴⁷ “To be sanctified is to have one’s character formed in a definite kind of way.”⁴⁸ “It is a process that requires transformation at the depths of one’s character and the development of specific virtues.”⁴⁹

“Character is not an accidental feature of our lives that can be distinguished from what we really are; rather character is a concept that denotes what makes us determinative moral agents. Our character is not a shadow of some deeper but more hidden real self; it is the form of our agency acquired through our beliefs and actions.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 158-159.

⁴⁷Joy, *Moral Development Foundations*, 57.

⁴⁸Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, 194.

⁴⁹Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics*, 73.

⁵⁰Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, 21.

“Nothing about my being is more me my character. Character is the basic aspect of our existence. It is the mode of the formation of our I for it is the character that provides the content of that I. If we are changed in any fundamental sense, then it must be a change of character. Nothing is more nearly to the heart of who we are than our character.”⁵¹

Once upon a time psychologists were greatly interested in character—what it meant and how it could be cultivated. But for many reasons the topic fell out of favor.... Gordon Allport, the main personality trait theorist in 20th century United States psychology, explicitly banished the term *character* from academic discourse concerning personality. He argued that character was the subject matter of philosophy and not psychology... Allport’s argument reflected the positivism sweeping social science at this time and its rigid distinction between fact and value... The best known exception to this generalization is research into moral development, which began with Piaget’s pioneering investigations of how children at different stages of cognitive development reasoned about the morality of everyday acts and was carried through by psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg. His work is well known, so much so that his theory of moral reasoning is the only instance most can think of as a psychological approach to morality.⁵²

Kohlberg’s theory of moral development can be simplified into three major stages of human progress. "Within these major levels, then, it appears that one might describe three predictable epochs in a life cycle that moved continuously and successfully toward maturing characteristics. They could be characterized as egocentric (self is assumed to be authority), heterocentric (authority is recognized as external to the self), and logocentric (authority is incorporated into self as principle from outside, having become internal)."⁵³

Arising from Kohlberg’s theory are several major problems. Firstly, both Kohlberg and Piaget convey an inordinately positive view of human beings. Mankind is viewed as inherently good and capable of great good (in and of themselves). There is

⁵¹Ibid., 203.

⁵²Christopher Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 55, 71.

⁵³Joy, *Moral Development Foundations*, 25.

no acknowledgement of the possibility of immoral development. Any recognition that humanity retains a capability of moral understanding and action is in harmony with the belief that the imago dei has not been obliterated. However, to thoroughly neglect to understand the intrinsic immorality of fallen man represents a serious deficit.

"We can rejoice that Piaget-Kohlberg investigation has begun and proceeded along positive lines and the pursuit of development of structures of justice. To date, however, the only offer to account for moral failure has been to see it as underdevelopment of some sort The biblical idea might take the search even further with its notion of moral man in a moral image deliberately choosing to revert to self-centeredness and destructive, anti-just, immoral reasoning and behaving. But what is the contribution of moral development research in seeking out this missing half of the moral domain?"⁵⁴

Secondly, there is insufficient examination of arrested development and its resulting moral pathologies. This is of particular interest in the rehabilitative field, where many persons are stuck in immature phases of moral development. The goal of Christian rehabilitation is to move individuals from intransigence, and even pathological immaturity, toward a logocentric (Christ-centered) experience.

⁵⁴Ibid., 57, 58.

“Ward and others of us have contemplated the characteristics of persons who become arrested at the upper edge of a major life epoch. The Level I pathology organizes around the characteristics of opportunism, and the Level II pathology centers on the features of bigotry. Beyond the legalism of Kohlberg’s stage 4 lies another optional pathology, the Stage 4 relativism.”⁵⁵

Finally, Kohlberg lacks a theistic, and more specifically Christian perspective that would lead to a complete understanding of human development and fulfillment. “It is not God to whom Kohlberg has opened his stage system, but faith. And Kohlberg knows only a faith that is the invention of the human mind devoid of any outside reality of which it is the construction.”⁵⁶

“The meaning of justice (Kohlberg’s moral essence) for the Christian theist is different from what it is for the humanist. The terminus of moral development for the Christian is God and his kingdom, and for the humanist it must of necessity be some understanding of man.”⁵⁷ Kohlberg’s goal of justice also falls short of the Christian ideal of love. “Clearly the first and most important theme that needs consideration is that self-giving love the New Testament named agape. It is a tie that binds persons into community, a bond superior to justice in that it touches deeper aspects of the self than the rational considerations upon which justice is founded.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵Ibid., 26.

⁵⁶Ibid., 46.

⁵⁷Ibid., 129.

⁵⁸Ibid., 106.

Finally, let us examine more closely moral character and its implications for this discussion. The humanistic psychological and scientific community views character as the result of natural processes. The atheistic evolutionary community is constantly theorizing the source of all human behavior being derived from natural selection and survival of the fittest. Traditionally, tooth and claw was the prevalent explanatory tool in theorizing our supposed descent from lower forms of primates. The exhibition of compassion and self-sacrifice has always been viewed as a bit of an evolutionary anomaly. More recently however, the ubiquitous exhibition of virtue in humanity has been shoehorned into the godless account of natural man's nativity. One such theory posits the development of character virtues developing out of the male/female mating relationship and the need for such attributes to preserve the species.

To summarize, our survey of influential religious and philosophical traditions reveals six broad virtue classes to be ubiquitous The ubiquity of these core virtues suggests the possibility of universality and eventually a deep theory about moral excellence phrased in evolutionary terms. One possibility is that these are purely cultural: acquired characteristics that . . . societies . . . select for. Another possibility is that the High Six (Courage, Justice, Humanity, Temperance, Transcendence, Wisdom) are purely biological, that they define the moral animal. And a third possibility, the one we lean to, that they are evolutionarily predisposed We are therefore pleased that the character strengths we identify almost all have (evolutionary) counterparts. Indeed, the strengths identified by evolutionary psychologists as desirable in mates agree well with the strengths that people most seek in close friends, the most valued of which are character strengths like honesty and responsibility.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 51-52, 76.

The development of moral attributes as merely a relational necessity for the purpose of preserving a species that accidentally became morally conscious, is diametrically opposed to the biblical account of the historical Adam created in the imago dei. Moral qualities did not come into existence for the sake of species preservation (though they have that resultant benefit). They were given to man and woman for eternal expression, not just temporal benefit in the struggle against death.

Humanity was invested with these virtues as a reflection of the moral and relational attributes of the Godhead. The righteous relationship between the first man and woman was not developed from a trial-and-error conflict of life and death; nor was it driven by purely biological needs. These moral virtues were expressions of moral beings created in the image of God.

Thus far we have established that mankind retains a vestige of the capacities and attributes that the Creator originally intended to invest them with at creation. Though humanity is primarily a material creature, they are also composed of certain immaterial attributes and qualities. Among these are the capacities of mind and will. Man is a free agent capable of making free choices. Without such a capacity the concept of morality would be virtually meaningless. “Virtue ethics works with an understanding of the self as a self-forming and determining agent . . . For actions to be morally meaningful, they cannot be reducible to external causes.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics*, 27.

"For to stress the significance of the idea of character is to be normatively committed to the idea that it is better for men to shape rather than to be shaped by their circumstances This normative commitment however, depends on being able to show how men can determine themselves beyond their cultural conditioning Such an emphasis depends on the fact that men do have the capacity to act in such a way to give their being the determination they choose. Therefore, the question and meaning of man's capacity for being an agent is at the center of the idea of character."⁶¹

Man was not only created to think and choose, but to literally *be*. Adam and Eve possessed a certain ontological personhood that reflected the holy and righteous character of God. This was the major way in which they could be like God—not in knowing good and evil, or being inherently immortal—but possessing an imparted righteousness. Sanctification involves the restoration of this righteous character in receptive humanity. The very nature of this Christian character development involves a process of transformative learning precipitating character change, character producing virtue, and the exercise of virtue likewise producing the further development of character. These processes may overlap and be difficult to isolate—yet, with the help of God, the promised Biblical result is realized.

⁶¹Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, 17,18.

"According to virtue theory, by contrast, we develop and help form our tendencies and dispositions through our choices and actions . . . we help form our own and each other's character. We are not, contrary to the voluntarist account, free from the constraints of character. Past choices and actions influence the kind of persons we become, and the kind of persons we become informs our choices and actions."⁶²

"The notion of a human good or telos includes the notion of becoming a certain sort of person: one who embodies and exemplifies such virtues as justice, courage, and temperance. Virtues are means to an end, for we could not reach the goal of becoming that sort of person without acquiring the virtues. But they are not mere means, for they are a central element of the goal itself."⁶³

"In simplest terms, being precedes doing, but doing shapes being. That is, who we have become, including our states of character, precedes and informs our choices and actions. But our choices and actions help shape who we are and thus our future choices and actions."⁶⁴

Progress is made toward the reproduction of Christ-like character, only with the help of Christ, and with Christ as the ultimate goal. True character development is uniquely Christocentric.

"Its central claim is that an adequate Christology includes the notion that Jesus of Nazareth embodies the true human good or end. Jesus Christ is not just another human being, but the paradigmatic human being

⁶²Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics*, 28.

⁶³Ibid., 21.

⁶⁴Ibid., 30.

Moreover, Christ is not simply the giver of rules and principles, but humanity's goal . . . In Jesus, we see the kind of people we are to become, the kind of humanity we are to embody . . . It is a goal that requires the transformation of the self into his likeness."⁶⁵

"Humans are uniquely interdependent with the Creator, the creation, and with one another. We bear the image of God and are sustained reflecting our true humanity only to the extent that we mirror the character of God who is the focal point of our attention."⁶⁶ "More specifically, sanctification involves the growth and transformation of oneself and one's character toward a partially determinate picture of the human good or end . . . It involves a life ever more in conformity with Christ . . . the dominant image is likeness to Christ."⁶⁷

This work of restoration is not instantaneous. The development of character is a progressive, lifelong transformative process. It is not accomplished without cooperation (or participation) from the saved person.

"One does not suddenly gain or lose virtues (those states of character or character traits that influence how we act and choose). Instead, it is a matter of moral education and growth, of continual practice or neglect, of incremental advancement or decline. One most often develops character in steps . . . The virtues are states of character usually acquired through time and work . . ."⁶⁸

⁶⁵Ibid., 78, 88, 89.

⁶⁶Joy, *Moral Development Foundations*, 17-18.

⁶⁷Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics*, 73.

⁶⁸Ibid., 24.

Newly emphasized in Christian ethics as a theme that helps explain pragmatic questions of behavior more readily than a purely formalist ethics. Character denotes the readiness for good action that comes to determine the dispositions of a moral agent. Persons possess inclinations to behave one way rather than another, and the cumulative force of these inclinations expresses their character. Character further addresses an aspect of ethics not expressed in formalist theory, viz., that one does not have to rationally reinvent behavior each time one returns to a piece of significant action. Rather we learn from experience, and that learning becomes part of us not only as a behavioral presupposition, but also as an aspect of the structuring of our reasoning self.⁶⁹

We have reviewed some of the philosophical, psychological, and biological understandings of human nature, mind, will, and character. Some of the resulting conclusions are as follows.

- 1) Mankind is primarily a wholistic, material being, with immaterial capacities and attributes.
- 2) Humanity's personality, character, and core potentials reside mostly in the brain and mind.
- 3) Human beings are volitional beings who possess in their minds the inherent ability to make free choice.
- 4) Humans are capable of brain change, and accompanying character transformation, through the use of their power of choice.
- 5) There are certain character qualities and moral attributes which persons lacking in may aspire to and exhibit in their lives.

From the perspective of this writer's ministerial and professional goals, we have established in theory that the persons confined in prisons are capable of change. They are capable of change that is fundamental to their very being and nature. In fact, this type of change (character transformation) is what both they, and all humanity, need most.

⁶⁹Joy, *Moral Development Foundations*, 106,107.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Biblical Foundation

Since the emphasis of this greater work will deal most specifically with Christian character development, and the restoration of a godly character within incarcerated Christians, this biblical foundation will examine firstly the quintessential anthropological text Genesis 1: 26, 27; also known as the *imago dei* (image of God) text. Secondarily, a related passage in 2 Peter 1:3-8 (the *divine nature* text) will be explored.

We proceed with an a priori approach grounded in a high view of the revelation and inspiration of an infallible and closed canon of scripture. This high view would include the traditional Protestant experience of *Sola Scriptura*, in the broader and fully authoritative sense of the term, as well as the more neglected Protestant emphases on *Tota Scriptura* and *Scriptura Sui Ipsius Interpres* (with their comprehensive connotations). It is not within the purview of this work to engage in a lengthy justification for these biblically based conclusions; suffice it to say conviction is grounded in the primacy, sufficiency, unity, totality, consistency, and clarity of the biblical revelation. This does not rule out the use of extra-biblical sources of information as in the case of Wesley's quadrilateral with its additional emphasis on tradition, reason, and experience. However, these more human-based sources must always be subservient to the Word of God (i.e. the Bible).

Though a rigorous exegetical/hermeneutic is essential, such scientific tools are only complete when sanctified by a spirit-led surrender to the supernatural Author of the Word, and persistence in prayer. With the aforementioned a priori background expressed, we now move on to the texts in question.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”⁷⁰

The foundational nature of this passage, as well as its general expressions, has made it the subject of numerous exegetical and hermeneutical approaches. Two important questions that arise out of verse 26 are as follows: “We are faced with two interpretive dilemmas that have historically plagued ancient and modern commentators. First, what or who is the referent of the plural pronouns *let us* and *our image and our likeness*? Second, what is the significance of the terms *image* and *likeness* for understanding the unique place of human life in the divine scheme of creation?”⁷¹

Regarding the first interpretive dilemma: “This is the first of four passages in the Old Testament where the plural is found in divine dialogue” (Gn 1: 26, 3:22, 11:7; Is 6:8).⁷² That some form of divine dialogue is occurring in verse 26 is evident by the context of the passage. The setting has to do with the creation of this earth and all its life

⁷⁰Gn 1:26–27 (NASB).

⁷¹K. A. Matthews, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996).

⁷²Ibid.

forms by Elohim—the culmination of which is the first male and female (the plural humanity made in God’s image), from whom all humanity descended. The plural name Elohim is used without exception when referring to God throughout the creation account of chapters 1 and 2. In chapter 2, the personal pronoun Yahweh accompanies Elohim as God becomes more intimately involved with creation—most specifically, with humanity. The verb asah (make) in verse 26 is also grammatically plural. The divine plural dialogue is absent from the account until the creative act of making mankind. The implication is that this climactic creative work required a more personal commentary, and even a deliberative divine dialogue, to accent its importance. “The plural indicates an intra-divine conversation, a plurality in the Godhead, between God and His Spirit. By its reference to “the Spirit of God” preparing the “earth” for the creative word (1:2), the narrative permits a co-participant with God in creation.”⁷³

We would add that the New Testament is more specific in its permission of another participant, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world” (Heb1: 1, 2).⁷⁴

From these two passages (Gn1: 2 and Heb1: 1, 2) it is evident that there were indeed co-participants involved in the creative act. There is also an inherent relationality implied within the person of God by the use of these dialogically plural expressions. It

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Gn 1:26–27.

would follow that deliberative dialogue would take place between these divine participants (or at the very least God engages in self-talk as where God elsewhere takes a self-oath Gn 22:16, etc.) rather than dialogue with angels or other created beings incapable of creation.

The primary characteristics revealed about God in this passage are plurality and relationality—the capacity to create, and by extension, sovereignty over creation. These are also three qualities invested in those made in the image of God, by which they correspond to God; such as the plurality and relationality of male and female and their promised progeny (v. 27), their delegated sovereignty over creation (v. 26), and their procreative calling (v. 28).

The reference to the creation of humankind found in the first creation narrative is, of course, the linchpin of the biblical teaching regarding humankind as the *Imago Dei* [image of God]. The linchpin of the text, in turn, is the Hebrew term, *tselem* (image). Biblical scholars are in general agreement that *tselem* carries a broad meaning, at the heart of which is the idea of representation.

Yet they are not of one mind regarding the significance of the creation of humankind in the divine image. Historically, the most widely held conjecture views the *imago dei* as entailing some type of similarity between humankind and God, whether this resemblance is solely physical, spiritual, or embracing the human person as a whole.⁷⁵

⁷⁵Stanley Grenz, "Jesus as the *Imago Dei*: Image-Of-God Christology and the Non-Linear Linearity of Theology," *JETS* 47/4 (2004): 617-628.

All exegetes from the fathers of the church to the present begin with the presupposition that the text (Gn 1:26-27) is saying something about people, namely that people bear God's image because they have been created in accordance with it. The whole question therefore centers on the image of God in the person: what is intended, in what does it consist, what does it mean. The interpretations of the image of God range from an actual, physical likeness to the notion that a person's reason, intellect, and will distinguishes humans from animals and connects humans to God. The difficulty in assessing this notion is that the Hebrew word *tselem* (image) literally means that which is cut out, suggesting a plastic imitation of that which it depicts. Nevertheless, the term *demuth* (likeness) proposes a more abstract association and is thought by some to ameliorate the physical association inferred by *tselem*. Therefore, the image of God need not be a strict physical copy, as if human beings physically reproduce the image and likeness of God, but might be a statement of a more psychological or intellectual association through corresponding spiritual qualities or capacities.⁷⁶

"In the New Testament, *eikön* (Septuagint *termeikön* translation of *tselem*) carries the force of what completely corresponds to the prototype or the perfect reflection of the prototype, to cite Porteous's description."⁷⁷ "He is the image of the invisible God . . ." (Col 1:15), "the exact imprint of God's very being" (Heb 1:3 NRSV), "Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4 NASB).

The book of Genesis is sometimes referred to as the Book of Firsts. It is the first time God refers to Himself (also with plural pronouns); also, the first use of the word image (in the Hebrew *tselem*), and its accompanying likeness (Heb *demuth*). The word *tselem* occurs seventeen times in the Old Testament. Five of those times are in Genesis (1:26, 27; 5:3; 9:6). Ten of the usages outside the book of Genesis describe physical representations.

⁷⁶Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11 A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1968), 155.

⁷⁷Stanley. Grenz, "Jesus as the *Imago Dei*: Image-Of-God Christology and the Non-Linear Linearity of Theology," *JETS* 47/4 (2004): 617-628. Quoting N.W. Porteous, 'Image of God', *IDB*, II, 684.

The word demuth occurs twenty-five times in the Old Testament.

Three of those times are in the book of Genesis (1:26; 5:1, 3). The word is often translated as "looking something like."

The two key words, most often translated image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demuth*), are each preceded by two respective prepositions, *b(beth)* and *k(kaph)*. In Genesis 5:1 (*beth*) precedes demuth instead of *tselem*. In the later description of Adam's procreation of his son Seth, the order of *tselem* and demuth is reversed. One of the questions arising from the use of *beth* prior to *tselem* in 1:26 is, 'does this constitute a *beth normae*, *beth* of model (Ex 25:40), or a *beth essentiae*?'

1:26 *b* - *tselem* *k* - *demuth*

1:27a *b* - *tselem*

1:27b *b* - *tselem*

5:1 *b* - *demuth*

5:3 *b* - *demuth* *k* - *tselem*

9:6 *b* - *tselem*

One notices that in all these verses the statement starts with *b*. In the two cases where a second term is added to the first, the second is introduced by *k*. Some scholars have interpreted the preposition *b* as the *b—essentiae*.⁷⁸

In the last reference to the word *tselem* Genesis (9:6) God gives the following prohibition, which is relevant to the theme of this paper: "Whoever sheds man's ('*adam* – a human person) blood, by man ('*adam*) his blood shall be shed, For in the image (*tselem*) of God He made man ('*adam* – a human person)."

⁷⁸Walter Vogels, "The Human Person in the Image of God." *Science et Spirit* XLVI/2 (1994): 198-202.

The implication is that the sanctity of life has its origin in the *imago dei*, and that somehow (even after the Fall and the Flood) something of this original dignity is retained in humanity. This will be a fundamental premise for this project—that the image and likeness of God before the Fall is still partially retained after the Fall (though well-nigh obliterated) and is capable of restoration, prior to glorification.

One writer has characterized six categories of interpreters. Those who:

- 1) distinguish between a natural and supernatural likeness to God
- 2) define the likeness in terms of spiritual capacities or abilities
- 3) interpret likeness as external form
- 4) differ sharply with #3
- 5) interpret this term as denoting that human beings are God's counterpart, the one who corresponds to God among the creatures
- 6) the *imago* as the human's status as the representative of God on earth⁷⁹

I am here taking a somewhat traditional ontological approach to the text in that the *imago dei* (though having some physical similarity to the pre-incarnate Christ) primarily expresses the moral and spiritual likeness invested in humanity—manifested in their relationship with God and one another, as well as the procreative and dominion activities resulting from their ontological investment.

The New Testament passage, often referred to as the ‘divine nature’ text (2 Pt 1:1-4), is key to the focus of this work. The book of 2 Peter has often engendered much controversy regarding its authenticity. These verses in particular are also used to support the controversial Orthodox concept of *theosis*.

⁷⁹Philip Hefner, “The Creation: The Human Being,” in *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1, C. E. Braaten and R. W. Jensen, eds. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984).

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these, He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities are blind or shortsighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you (2 Pt 1:1-11, NASB).

“2 Peter 1:4 has been appreciated in very different ways in the history of biblical interpretation, especially the phrase usually translated ‘partakers of the divine nature.’ This phrase has been taken, on the one hand, as explicit biblical support for the Greek Orthodox doctrine of θέωσις—the teaching that the goal of salvation in Christ is man's deification or divinization. On the other hand, many contemporary biblical scholars in the West have argued that this text is a kind of alien intrusion into the New Testament as a whole In short, there seems to be a widespread feeling among contemporary New Testament scholars that 2 Peter 1:4 represents something alien, or at least unusual, in the New Testament—indeed, in the Bible as a whole.”⁸⁰

⁸⁰Al Wolters, “Partners of the Deity: A Covenantal Reading of 2 Peter 1:4.” *Calvin Theological Journal* 25 (1990): 28-9.

On the other hand:

“No book in the Canon is so poorly attested among the Fathers, yet 2 Peter has comparably better support for its inclusion than the best attested of the excluded books.”⁸¹ “Despite 2 Peter’s difficulties (and there are many), it still has significantly more support for its inclusion in the canon than the best of those books which have been rejected.”⁸²

One of the reasons often given for 2 Peter being included among the ‘pseudepigrapha’ is its difference linguistically from 1 Peter. Yet, the variation has been shown to be as close as 1 and 2 Corinthians, which are not questioned. Another reason for the letter’s frequent rejection is its resemblance to the writings of philosophers. One valid explanation for this difference is 2 Peter’s use of these common expressions and idioms to counteract the philosopher’s claims. “That the writer is making use in 2 Peter 1 of pagan metaphysical language reveals an underlying motivation: to demonstrate an awareness of and relevance to the social location of his audience.”⁸³ “He makes a frontal assault on Stoic and Platonic presuppositions, who taught, respectively, that by phusis (nature) or nomos (law) a man became partaker of the divine. No, says our author; it is by grace, by the gospel promises, that this comes about . . .”⁸⁴

⁸¹Michael Green, *The Second General Epistle of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 13.

⁸²Michael Kruger, “The Authenticity of 2 Peter,” *JETS* 42/4 (1999): 649.

⁸³Daryl Charles, “The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5-7.” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 8 (1998): 64.

⁸⁴Green, *The Second General Epistle of Peter*, 26.

Regarding the syntax of the passage in question: “Commentators disagree concerning the syntax of 2 Peter 1:1-7, especially that of verses 3-4. Some understand verses 3-4 as a continuation of the salutation of the letter (vs. 1-2). Others view verses 3-4 as the beginning of a sentence that continues in versus 5-7; still others interpret verses 3-4 as an independent sentence standing between verses 1-2 and verses 5-7 More specifically, I will argue that verses 3-4 should be understood as the protasis of a conditional sentence of which verses 5-7 are the apodosis.”⁸⁵

The frequent occurrence of *dikaios/dikaiosynē* in 2 Peter (eight times: 1:1, 13; 2:5, 7, 8[2x], 21; 3:13) has a distinctly ethical quality and is all the more significant because of its frequency in Hellenistic ethical lists, though with an entirely different inflection. Nevertheless, from the outset this is observed to be righteousness imparted by God, not manufactured by human effort. Not what is achieved but what is received is understood by the author to be the foundation of Christian experience. And lest the readers misinterpret the ethical admonitions to follow as a form of works-righteousness or striving that is rooted solely in the power of the human will, the writer emphasizes that the power to lead an ethical life resides not in human strength but in divine provision. Knowledge, thus, is integral to literary strategy in 2 Peter. A second key term, *eusebeia*, godliness or piety, also appears in the opening context. Following the greeting, knowledge and godliness are united in 1:3-4 in a way that serves two strategic hortatory functions: (1) Together they preview the foremost ethical burden of the writer (“You know these things” [1:12]; “What sort of persons should you be in leading lives of holiness and godliness?” [3:11]); and (2) They are, moreover, couched together in language reminiscent of pagan metaphysics: “According to the divine power everything necessary for life and godliness has been given to us through the knowledge of him who has called us by his own glory and goodness” (1:3). The effect of this full repository—*ta timia kai megista epaggelmata*—is that, stated positively, the readers might become partakers of the divine nature (1:4) and, stated negatively, they might thereby escape the corruption that is in the world because of lust.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Terrance Callan, “The Syntax of 2 Peter 1:1-7,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005): 632-3.

⁸⁶Charles, “The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5-7,” 62.

Not only would a catalog of virtues be an appropriate way of countering a deterioration of the moral life in the community, it would be all the more relevant based on the catalog's popular usage The catalog achieves its climax in agape, which distinguishes the Christian ethos and without which it would be incomplete. Christian morality is distinctly the morality of charity. It is the morality of fruit-bearing, which is to say that it gives evidence of an internal work of grace, demonstrating gratitude through one's actions, thus seeing Christian morality issues from a wholly unique motivation. This is, then, no rigorist asceticism; rather, it is an ethos that is rooted in and flows from a divine source. Agape is the fount and the goal of Christian virtuous action; therein lies the difference between the Christian and pagan ethos.⁸⁷

As with most of such comparisons, the Biblical concept of agape (exemplified at the cross) is virtually absent in non-Christian philosophical systems. Even within Christian communities there is the constant need for admonitions to appropriate this virtue. "At the very least, one may assume that the rhetorical effect created by the progression and climax of the virtues in 2 Peter 1 is mirroring a concrete situation in which there has been fundamental ethical breakdown. This impression is strengthened by the recurrence of key words throughout the epistle—for example, knowledge, righteousness, piety, depravity, destruction, and judgment—in addition to the use of moral paradigms as prototypes of catastrophic judgment (chapter 2). In order to address this crisis, the writer appropriates a standard hortatory device to underscore the necessity of the moral life as proof of one's profession both to the community and to the world (1:10-11)."⁸⁸

"Peter got to the heart of the matter of holiness with his words in 2 Peter 1:3-4. Here he affirmed that the ultimate condition, prerequisite, or essential foundation for holiness in the believer's life is God's divine power." "Seeing that His divine power [*της*

⁸⁷Ibid., 65, 70.

⁸⁸Ibid., 59.

θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ] has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."⁸⁹

"The first section (vv 3-4) establishes the basis for Christian living, in what God in Christ has done for us. By the divine power evident in Christ's life, death and resurrection he has called men and women to be Christians, and when they come to knowledge of Christ in Christian conversion they also receive through that knowledge the grace of Christ which will enable them to live a life of obedience to God."⁹⁰

"The perfect tense of the verb *δωρεω* verifies its accomplished nature, with continuing results in the present. The all-inclusiveness of what He has granted is amazing. He has given everything necessary for the outworking of holiness."⁹⁰

"The participle having escaped (*αποφυγόντες*) reveals the Christian's complete separation in principle and position from the world system."⁹¹

"The divine virtue and transcendent goodness manifested in Jesus both constitute and validate the call to come and participate in the divine nature. We are promised a share in his moral excellence during this life, and of his glory hereafter. For, taken together, the triple agency of the promises, the power and the person of the Lord Jesus regenerate a man and make him a sharer in God's own nature, so that the family likeness begins to be seen in him."⁹²

⁸⁹ Fredrick R. Howe, "The Christian Life in Peter's Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157 (July-September 2000): 307.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 308.

⁹² Green, *The Second General Epistle of Peter*, 73.

"For we have become partakers of Christ" (Heb 3:14). "The fact that believers are sharers in God's own nature," as Green puts it, flows directly from the enabling power of God in our striving for holiness. Peter was not implying anything even remotely associated with the idea of the deification of humanity, or the idea that believers are somehow absorbed into the nature of God Himself. Peter's teaching here is that believers share God's divine nature, and this harmonizes with other New Testament verses that speak of the believer's union with Christ, and thus of their being vital members of God's family."⁹³

"2 Peter 1:5-9 lists ingredients of a holy life. The passage begins, 'Now for this very reason' (*καὶ αὐτό τούτο δε*). Because of God's rich provisions, stated in verses 3-4, believers are urged to have their lives characterized by the virtues or traits mentioned in verses 5-7."⁹⁴

This type of literary structure is called a sorites. This is a set or group of terms that proceed "step by step, through the force of logic or reliance upon a succession of indisputable facts, to a climactic conclusion, each statement picking up the last key word (or key phrase) of the preceding one." Another New Testament example of this pattern of thought, a sorites, is Romans 5:3-5. Possibly the best way to view this entire list is to see that they are interrelated and interconnected. In the phrase applying all diligence the word applying translates *παρ-εισενέγκαντες*, an aorist active participle of *παρεκτ φέρω*, to bring in or supply besides. The thrust of this strong word is this: believers are to furnish alongside of what God has already accomplished for them (as noted in verses. 3-4) the seven qualities that make up the sorites. The New American Standard Bible accurately translates the next word *επιχορηγήσατε* (aorist active imperative of *έπιχορηγέω*) as supply.⁹⁵

⁹³Howe, "The Christian Life in Peter's Theology," 308.

⁹⁴Ibid., 309.

⁹⁵Ibid., 311.

"Surely there is a resonance in the mind of the readers between the way in which *aretē* is used here and its application to ethics immediately following (1:5). To wit: there exists a relationship between God's moral character and ours."⁹⁶

By appropriation of God's promises we become participants in the divine nature. An extreme theosis interpretation of divination must be avoided because of the singular language in the text and the rest of biblical theology brought to bear upon the expression. Whatever the expression participants in divine nature means it does not mean that such participation is an inherent possession of humanity, nor that it results from human effort. Instead, it is a gracious privilege promised through our union with Christ—through His saving work. The result of being *in* Christ is a divine enabling. The sanctifying indwelling of the divine Spirit, and the exceeding precious promises, will motivate the believer to climb the ladder of virtue—becoming more like God morally and spiritually. The ultimate fulfillment of this experience will be at the *visio dei*, when faith becomes sight.

Historical Foundation

The Old Testament text often considered to be the ground of ontology, anthropology, soteriology etc., is the creative pronouncement found in Genesis 1: 26-27. It is difficult to overestimate this text's importance. "Man created according to the image of God is a topic that draws the most attention within the first chapter, and no theologian in the present or in the past can avoid determining the nature of this image."⁹⁷

⁹⁶Charles, "The Language and Logic of Virtue," 64.

⁹⁷Theo Bell, "Man is a Microcosmos - Adam and Eve in Luther's Lectures on Genesis," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 69:2 (2005): 162.

The expression in our image, after our likeness has been approached historically by theologians in a variety of ways—usually by isolating one or more characteristics of humanity that are then said to express the *imago dei* in question. In other cases the expressions image and likeness are separated rather than synonymous. Various aspects of the image, and/or likeness, are then either lost or retained post-lapsarian; and, then regained in either the pre or post glorification existence.

“The first Christians were deeply influenced by their Jewish roots, especially the Hebrew Bible’s teaching about God’s creation of human beings in His image (Gn 1:26-31). Paul picked up this idea in addressing God’s work of sanctification of the new self, who is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator (Col 3:9-10 cf. Eph 4:22-24). Indeed, the apostle described the entire process of Christian growth as being progressively conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29; Col 3:18).”⁹⁸

Since human nature and behavior is multifaceted it would seem that the general expression of this seminal pericope was meant to encompass a holistic definition rather than one single defining aspect of the human phenomenon. Therefore, to a greater or lesser extent, each historical commentator has an element of accuracy in his or her interpretation of the text. The following are some of the major views proposed historically:

Substantive—These are based on the view that the *imago* is something substantively possessed by human beings—including but not limited to, the ontological qualities. These inherent characteristics would include the will, reason, emotions and intellect; as well as more spiritual and moral capacities having to do with the soul (including the concept of original righteousness).

⁹⁸Greg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 201), 326.

For the most part these distinctive qualities are those, which set humanity apart from the animal creation. The major relevant commentators Iraneus, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Aquinas would all fall into this interpretative category.

Functional—According to this view the *imago dei* is concerned primarily with the *raison d'être* of humanity rather than its ontology. The focus is on the immediate contextual purpose of exercising dominion over the recently created order found in Genesis 1:28-30 (also in the parallel text Ps 8:5-6).

Relational—The most famous proponent of this view was Karl Barth. The unique capacity of man *and* woman (male and female) for relationship with each other; and with God, is considered a primary application of the *imago dei* pericope. The plurality of the Godhead (Let Us), as well as the plurality of male and female is indicative of relationship. Thus relationship is found to express the most prominent aspect of the *imago dei* concept.

Dynamic—The *imago dei* constitutes a transformative process moving toward a soteriological telos that reflects the original created paradigm—as well as the redemptive exemplar of the quintessential *imago dei*—Jesus Christ. A progression toward the ultimate *visio dei*.

Holistic—This view would encompass at least some portion of all the previous approaches. In general, the *imago dei* would be understood to represent both the ontological and experiential aspects of humanity (the structural and the functional).

Further ways of categorizing the approaches to *imago dei* concept are as follows:

Similarity—This would include both corporeal and non-corporeal characteristics.

Partnership—A relational partnership representation of God.

Dominion—Dominion is either viewed as the essence of the *imago dei*; or, the *imago dei* constitutes the basis for dominion.

Representative—Human beings were created in the *imago dei* primarily to be God's representatives on earth.

Let us proceed with a chronological examination of the theological propositions of prominent historical authorities that addressed this issue. “All exegetes from the fathers of the church to the present begin with the presupposition that the text (Gn 1:26-27) is saying something about people, namely that people bear God's image because they have been created in accordance with it. The whole question therefore centers around the image of God in the person: what is intended, in what does it consist, what does it mean.”⁹⁹

⁹⁹Westermann, *Genesis 1-11 A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1968), 155.

Before examining in detail the historical commentary on the relevant biblical passages, it would be helpful to be reminded that, no matter how authoritative, a large portion of the writings of the Fathers lack the qualities we would characterize as ‘evangelical’ today. This would indicate that very early on in church history there was a major divergence from biblical theology that would not be regained until the Reformation.

“On the other hand the theology of the fathers, still less accords with the Protestant standard of orthodoxy. We seek in vain among them for the evangelical doctrines of the exclusive authority of the scriptures, justification by faith alone, the universal priesthood of the laity; and we find instead as early as the second century a high estimate of ecclesiastical traditions, meritorious and even over-meritorious works, and strong sacerdotal, sacramental, ritualistic, and ascetic tendencies, which gradually matured in the Greek and Roman types of catholicity.”¹⁰⁰

“The Apostolic Fathers saw immortality as a gift of God, not a natural property of the human soul. Immortality is connected with the event of Christ’ resurrection, which presages the general resurrection. The Apostolic Fathers put significant emphasis on the resurrection of the flesh.”¹⁰¹

“Similar to the Apostolic Fathers, the apologists have a holistic approach to human nature; however, they incline toward a Platonically oriented view of the natural immortality of the human soul.”¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 390.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 52.

¹⁰²Ibid., 85.

The first writer to have seriously dealt with this matter was the early Greek Father Iraneus Bishop of Lyons. In his most famous work, the refutation of Gnosticism *Against Heresies*, Iraneus speaks at length regarding the imago dei. He is most famous for drawing a distinction between the words image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demuth*). He contends that post-lapsarian humanity retains the image; but, by reason of the fall, has lost the likeness. Rationality and volition are still manifest and would constitute the ‘image’ qualities.

“The image was the human’s natural resemblance to God, the power of reason and will. The likeness was a donum superadditum—a divine gift added to basic human nature. This likeness consisted of the moral qualities of God, whereas the image involved the natural attributes of God. When Adam fell, he lost the likeness, but the image remained fully intact. Humanity as humanity was still complete, but the good and holy being was spoiled.”¹⁰³

“Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modeled after, His own Son. For by the hands of the Father, that is by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God.”¹⁰⁴

“But man He fashioned with His own hands, taking of the purest and finest of earth, in measured wise mingling with the earth His own power; for He gave his frame the outline of His own form, that the visible appearance too should be godlike—for it was as an image of God that man was fashioned and set on earth—and that he might come to

¹⁰³Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 522.

¹⁰⁴John Keble, trans. *Against Heresies: Iraneus* (Oxford, UK: James Parker & Co., 1872), 5, 6, 1.

life, He breathed into his face the breath of life, so that the man became like God in inspiration as well as in frame.”¹⁰⁵

“How, then, shall he [man] be a God, who has not as yet been made a man? Or how can he be perfect who was but lately created? How, again, can he be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker? For it must be that thou, at the outset, shouldest hold the rank of a man, and then afterwards partake of the glory of God.”¹⁰⁶

“And so fair and goodly was the Garden, the Word of God was constantly walking in it; He would walk round and talk with the man, prefiguring what was to come to pass in the future, how He would become man’s fellow, and talk with him, and come among mankind, teaching them justice.”¹⁰⁷

“We lost, in Adam, the privilege of being in the image and likeness of God”

¹⁰⁸“Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man?”¹⁰⁹
“[U]nless He (the Son) had Himself been made flesh and blood after the way of the original formation [of man], saving in his own person at the end that which had in the beginning perished in Adam . . . He had Himself, therefore, flesh and blood, recapitulating in Himself not a certain other, but that original handiwork of the Father, seeking out that thing which had perished.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 4, 39, 2.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 3, 18, 1.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 4, 34.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 5, 14, I and 2.

“The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself ”¹¹¹

Augustine Bishop of Hippo developed a Trinitarian conception of the *imago dei* with a parsing of mankind’s image into triune aspects (most notably; understanding, will, and memory). His viewpoint would lead to the dominant western tradition.

“Augustine began with a strong assertion of the goodness of humanity as created by God . . . ‘on marriage and concupiscence.’ He described the image of God in human beings as being reflective of the Trinity . . . on the trinity; of course, after the fall, the situation changed, and each human being is completely depraved and corrupted by sin.”¹¹²

In books 13-14 of *De Trinitate*, Augustine continues his account of the *imago dei* as he develops it in a historic-redemptive fashion. His method in the second half of *De Trin* is to map out the biblical doctrine of man in his fourfold state. That is to say, he articulates his anthropology in terms of man in the state of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. Books nine through eleven concern the *imago dei* in man by virtue of his creation and in the ideal setting of innocence. Book twelve concerns the *imago dei* in man as fallen and in a state of innocence lost. Book thirteen concerns the *imago dei* in man in the state of redemption and innocence regained. And book fourteen concerns the *imago dei* in man in consummate and eschatological glory. In other words, biblical revelation “from Genesis to Revelation” forms the macro-structure in which he sets forth his theological anthropology . . . ¹¹³

¹¹¹Ibid., 5, Preface.

¹¹²Greg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 331.

¹¹³HistoriaSalutis, “Augustine, the Image of God, and Biblical Theology,” accessed December 2013 <http://historiasalutis.com/2009/11/18/augustine-the-image-of-god-and-biblical-theology/>.

“Key to understanding Augustine’s Trinitarian *imago Dei* and thus his concept of the mind, is understanding also that image was damaged in Adam, but is being restored in Christ. This is the subject of books XII-XIV.”¹¹⁴

“And so you have a certain image of the trinity, the mind itself and its knowledge, which is its offspring and its word about itself, and love as the third element, and these three are one (1 Jn 5:8) and are one substance. Nor is the offspring less than the mind so long as the mind knows itself as much as it is, or is love any less than the mind so long as it loves itself as much as it knows and as much as it is.”¹¹⁵

“Our answer here is: Since then it was not man himself, but God, who made man good; so also is it God, and not man himself, who remakes him to be good, while liberating him from the evil which he himself did upon his wishing, believing, and invoking such a deliverance. But all this is affected by the renewal day by day of the inward man, by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ”¹¹⁶

Aquinas also deals with the *imago dei* theme, making copious references to Augustine’s work in the process. “The image of God, in its principal signification, namely the intellectual nature, is found both in man and in woman.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴Jerry M. Ireland, “Augustine of Hippo’s Trinitarian *Imago Dei* for Balancing Intellect and Emotion in the Life of Faith,” *Holy Spirit and Christian Life Conference: Regent University* (2013).

¹¹⁵Edmond Hill, trans. *St. Augustine The Trinity De Trinitate* (New York, NY: New York City Press, 2012), 9.3.18.

¹¹⁶Phillip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church - Augustine, On Man’s Perfection in Righteousness* (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2009).

¹¹⁷Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York, NY: Benziger Bros., 194). pt. 1 q. 93 art. 4.

“As God's substance is His act, the highest likeness of man to God is in respect of some operation. Wherefore, as we have said above, happiness or bliss by which man is made most perfectly conformed to God, and which is the end of human life, consists in an operation.”¹¹⁸

For Luther, this image-character is not identical with certain natural qualities, which are owned by all human beings. The image of God is not an active human power in the first place but rather the right relationship of a person to God Divines give other divisions and definitions of the qualities of this image of God, in which man was originally created. They hold that memory is the image of the power of God, mind the image of his wisdom and will the image of his justice. It was after this manner that Augustine, and after him others, bent their minds on the discovery of certain trinities of natural qualities or endowments in man. For they thought that by this mode of explanation, the image of God in man would be the more clearly seen. These not unpleasing speculations do indeed argue faithful employment and great acuteness of mental ability, but they by no means aid the right explanation of this image of God I fear however that since this image of God has been lost by sin, we can never fully attain to the knowledge of what it was. Memory, mind and will we do most certainly possess, but wholly corrupted, most miserably weakened; nay, that I may speak with greater plainness, utterly leprous and unclean. If these natural endowments therefore constitute the image of God it will inevitably follow that Satan also was created in the image of God; for he possesses all these natural qualities, and to an extent and strength far beyond our own; for he has a memory and an intellect the most powerful and a will the most obstinate. The image of God therefore is something far different from all this. It is a peculiar work of God¹¹⁹

“Wherefore I for my part understand the image of God to be this: that Adam possessed it in its moral substance or nature; that lie not only knew God and believed him to be good, but that he lived also a life truly divine; that is, free from the fear of death and of all dangers and happy in the favor of God”¹²⁰

¹¹⁸Ibid., pt. 2 q. 55 art. 2.

¹¹⁹John Lenker, *Luther on Creation: A Critical and Devotional Commentary on Genesis*. (Minneapolis, MN: Lutherans in all Lands Company, 1904), 116-19.

¹²⁰Ibid.

Now the very intent of the gospel is to restore this image of God. Man's intellect and will have indeed remained, but wholly corrupted. The divine object of the gospel is that we might be restored to that original and indeed better and higher image; an image, in which we are born again unto eternal life, or rather unto the hope of eternal life by faith, in order that we might live in God and with God and might be one with him, as Christ so beautifully and largely sets it forth in the seventeenth chapter of John. Nor are we born again unto life only, but unto righteousness also, because faith lays hold of the merit of Christ and sets us free through the death of Christ. Hence arises another righteousness in us; namely, that newness of life, in which we study to obey God as taught by the Word and helped by the Holy Spirit. This righteousness however begins only in this life and can never be perfected in the flesh. Nevertheless this newness of righteousness pleases God, not as being perfect in itself nor as being any price for our sins, but because it proceedeth from the heart and rests on a confidence in the mercy of God through Christ¹²¹

“In this manner does the image of God begin to be restored in us through the Gospel by this new creation in this life. But in this life it is not perfected. When however it is perfected in the kingdom of the Father, then will our will be truly free and good, our mind truly illuminated and our memory constant and perfect.”¹²²

John Calvin agrees with Augustine's assessment that the *imago dei* entails a mirror-like reflection. He does not separate the words *tselem* and *demuth*. Many of the Reformers likewise rejected this distinction. He instead views the passage as a chiastic hendiadys in which two words express one idea. “For although God's glory shines forth in the outer man, yet there is no doubt that the proper seat of his image is in the soul.”¹²³

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³John, Calvin, trans. Henry Beveridge, *Institutes of Christian Religion* (Christian Classics Ethereal Library) 1.15.3.

John Wesley also had much to say regarding the imago dei and its pivotal influence on both anthropology and soteriology. ‘Wesley’s important theological themes such as original sin, prevenient grace, justification, and sanctification have the imago dei as their axil theme. For Wesley, salvation is defined as the restoration of the image of God. With the concept of the imago dei, Wesley expounds his typical order of salvation—creation, the Fall, and restoration. Wesley explained his concept of the imago Dei from three aspects, namely, the natural, political, and moral images of God For Wesley, the moral image is the principle image of God. It reflects the very righteousness and holiness of God.’¹²⁴

“As Wesley understood that the original intention of God’s creation is happiness and holiness, and that these are to be found in the likeness of the imago dei, his understanding of soteriology can be seen as a journey, a journey of restoring the imago dei.”¹²⁵

“In the image of God was man made; holy, as he that created him is holy, merciful as the author of all is merciful, perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. As God is love, so man dwelling in love dwelt in God, and God in him. God made him to be an image of his own eternity, an incorruptible picture of the God of glory. He was accordingly pure, as God is pure, from every spot of sin. He knew not evil in any kind or degree, but was inwardly and outwardly sinless and undefiled. He loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength.”¹²⁶

¹²⁴Young Taek Kim, *John Wesley’s Anthropology: Restoration of the Imago Dei as a Framework for Wesley’s Theology* (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 2006), 1.

¹²⁵SunAe Lee-Koo, *Humility as a Key Component of John Wesley’s Understanding of a Christian’s Spiritual Development* (Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 2011), 63-4.

¹²⁶John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions: Justification by Faith - The Works, I*, 1771.

“Yet his merciful Creator did not leave him in this helpless, hopeless state. He immediately appointed his Son, his well-beloved Son, who is the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, to be the Savior of men, the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; the great Physician, who by his Almighty Spirit would heal the sickness of their souls, and restore them not only to the favor but to the image of God wherein they were created”¹²⁷ (Cf. Heb 1:3; Col, 3:10; and 1Jn 2:2).

The second Bible text that we will examine is the Eastern Orthodox Theological development out of the recapitulation view of the atonement is called theosis.

Of course, Christian monotheism goes against any literal god making of believers. Rather, the New Testament speaks of a transformation of mind, a metamorphosis of character, a redefinition of selfhood, and an imitation of God. Billings insists that although Calvin advocates in many writings union between Christ and the believer his position differs substantially from the late Byzantine notion of theosis, on the grounds that the reformer nowhere insists that this union amounts to a complete ontological assimilation of humanity to God. In the Orthodox Church, this concept is neither new nor startling. It even has a name: theosis. Theosis is the understanding that human beings can have real union with God, and so become like God to such a degree that we participate in the divine nature. Also referred to as deification, divinization, or illumination, it is a concept derived from the New Testament regarding the goal of our relationship with the Triune God. (Theosis and deification may be used interchangeably. We will avoid the term divinization, since it could be misread for divination, which is another thing altogether!) “We become united with God by grace in the Person of Christ, who is God come in the flesh. The means of becoming like God is through perfection in holiness, the continuous process of acquiring the Holy Spirit by grace through ascetic devotion. Some Protestants might refer to this process as sanctification. Another term for it, perhaps more familiar to Western Christians, would be mortification—putting sin to death within ourselves. In fact, deification is very akin to the Wesleyan understanding of holiness or perfection, with the added element of our mystical union with God in Christ as both the means and the motive for attaining perfection.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions: The Mystery of Iniquity*, §2, *The Works, II*, 1771.

¹²⁸Stephen Finlan, , and Vladimir Kharlamov, *Theosis Deification in Christian Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 1-2.

“Second Peter is not assimilationist, nor does he speak of becoming gods or God, but of partaking of divine nature, which seems to mean divine character, knowledge of the Savior, and proper self-controlled and ethical behavior.”¹²⁹

“The believer needs to reject corruption, learn about Christ, and take on His virtues. This is a virtue soteriology: one is saved by, and for, virtue. But it is virtue mediated through Christ; salvation and divination are thoroughly Christological Divinization is progress into greater moral excellence; the means for achieving it are also a matter of choosing moral excellence.”¹³⁰

“Deification is spiritual growth directed by the Savior toward the inculcation of the divine nature, which seems to mean character values. So what is divinized is one’s character....”¹³¹

“There is a conceptual, but not terminological, connection between taking on God’s nature (2 Pt 1:4) and believers being conformed (*symmorfous*) to the image of his Son and conformed to the body of his glory (Rom 8:29 and Phil 3:21, respectively) being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.”¹³²

In conclusion, it is not difficult to see the importance that the *imago dei* and divine nature concepts have had on the historical theology of the church. It is essential to understand anthropology before one can understand soteriology. The understanding has gone through obvious evolutions and developments.

¹²⁹Ibid., 42.

¹³⁰Ibid., 46.

¹³¹Ibid., 48.

¹³²Ibid., 44.

In this research at large, we will lean toward the Reformation and Wesleyan perspective on anthropology and soteriology—most specifically the emphasis on the restoration of the divine similitude in Christian life and experience.

Theological Foundation

This foundation will undertake an exploration of the anthropological implications surrounding the original creation of humanity in the image of God, and the soteriological process of restoring what was lost due to the advent of sin. The initial question arising from this research has to do with what actually constitutes the original *imago dei*—or the essential anthropology of mankind. There have been a wide variety of approaches to this question arising from the lack of any explicitly definitive expressions on the subject in scripture. The approach taken to Christian anthropology in this paper will be a wholistic one. Since God created humankind in every respect; we will support a view of the *imago dei* that encompasses the sum total of mankind. “Scriptures emphasis on the whole man as the image of God has triumphed time and time again over all objections and opposing principles.”¹³³

Before examining the more important aspects of the *imago dei* that have a direct bearing on soteriology, it must first be stated that biblical anthropology is grounded in Christology. “It is clear that... basing anthropology on Christology derives from the idea that we cannot understand man apart from his relation to God. In our opinion, this position is unassailable...”¹³⁴

¹³³G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1962), 77.

¹³⁴Ibid., 93.

To understand the true nature of man (at least as originally intended) one must understand the true nature of Christ—the representative man. From a biblical perspective the *imago dei* can be virtually equated with the *imago Christi*. Orthodoxy has expressed Christ as fully God and fully man. If as the New Testament frequently implies; Christ was the embodied fullness of God, then it can be inferred that He represents also the fullness of man as intended originally at creation. He is of course referred to as the second Adam. Contrary to the neo-orthodox view of Barth (who virtually denies the historicity of the first Adam) there is a very concrete comparison between these two very real persons—and their implications and applications for us.

“In the matter of human disobedience and depravity there is no earlier in which man was not yet a transgressor and as such innocent.” Human history “constantly re-enacts the little scene in the Garden of Eden. There never was a golden age. There is no point in looking back to one. The first man was immediately the first sinner.” Barth insists that “it is the Word of God which forbids us to dream of any golden age in the past or any real progress within Adamic mankind and history or any future state of historical perfection.”¹³⁵

One must seriously consider why persons holding a reasonable confidence in the combined testimony of Scripture (including Christ’s own statements supporting the historicity of Adam and the future state) would not hold these statements as suspect.

¹³⁵Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV.1 The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2004), 508, 511, 551.

In contradiction to the view of Barth, Hoekema states: “The denial of the historicity of Adam is not only contrary to Scripture; it also has devastating results for the doctrine of man.”¹³⁶

A correct anthropology is foundational to a correct soteriology. If you deny where man came from, and where he is going—all that remains is a manmade construct, having no resemblance to the Biblical revelation. The ultimate historical future of mankind, according to scripture, will be realized in the perfection of Christ (1 Jn 3:2).

“An adequate Christology includes the notion that Jesus of Nazareth embodies the true human good or end. Jesus Christ is not just another human being, but the paradigmatic human being Moreover, Christ is not simply the giver of rules and principles, but humanity’s goal In Jesus, we see the kind of people we are to become, the kind of humanity we are to embody It is a goal that requires the transformation of the self into his likeness.”¹³⁷

Christ exhibited the *imago dei* in its sinless, and most important constituent characteristics. Notably absent during his incarnation was a bodily form like Adam’s. The post-Fall physical (bodily) nature of man has obviously been marred and defaced by the ravages of sin—resulting in ensuing death. So it was also with Christ’s incarnate form. He inherited fallen genetics from his earthly mother. He was like unto his fallen human brethren physically and did not stand out as being different, unusual, or somehow supernatural in physical appearance.

¹³⁶Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 116.

¹³⁷Joseph Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996) 78, 88, 89.

If the historical second Adam were placed next to the historical pre-fall first Adam (a man who was literally created to live eternally as the *imago dei*, and lived nearly 1,000 years after his fall), there would be dramatic differences in their physical appearance. The first Adam would be physically superior in every way. However, we must conclude that they both would be recognizable as human beings possessing the same fundamental constituents—i.e., sight, speech, hearing, hands, feet, upright gait, etc. If the incarnate Christ represented the quintessential *imago dei*, then the most important aspect of this term must not refer to the physical aspect of mankind (though this component is not to be ruled out). “The marvel of man’s bodily appearance is not at all to be excepted from the realm of God’s image.”¹³⁸

The biblical record indicates that the pre-incarnate Christ held converse and communion with the pre-fall Adam in his *imago dei* innocence. God is mentioned as walking in the garden searching for the post-fall Adam in the cool of the day. It is difficult to interpret this walk as some kind of metaphor or symbol. It is most likely that Christ and Adam held regular communion at appointed seasons of the day. Their appearance would have been similar—Christ as a pre-incarnate, human-like theophany, Adam as the created *imago dei*. There is further precedent of the Christ theophany appearing to men as a man after the Fall as well. Furthermore, there is ample scriptural evidence to support the view that Christ will retain a glorified human form in eternity.

It is entirely possible that taking human form, and making man in a form like to Himself, was always in Christ’s eternal purpose. We can then conclude that Adam was like unto God physically, in that he was similar to Christ—who appeared in a form similar to his own, and had the capability to walk as he walked.

¹³⁸Gerhard.Von Rad, *Genesis A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1961), 56.

Another paradox of the Fall is that Eve (also constituting the *imago dei*) was tempted to become like God (to know good and evil). Eve and Adam were already like God, both physically, and in more fundamental ways—as the Biblical record implies. In striving to become more like God in the way denied her, Eve (and subsequently Adam) became tragically more like the originator of evil in nature and character, and less like God in the same manner.

“Hence this likeness is the complete opposite of that which the Devil falsely placed before man in Paradise This presentation of being like God is the opposite of the image of God.”¹³⁹

Though they may have initially retained the same physical resemblance, they very quickly lost the *imago dei* resemblance in virtually every other way. The most dramatic loss in the Fall was their loss of original *imago dei* righteousness. This resulted in their ‘nakedness of soul’ and a resulting need for Christ’s righteousness to make up for their deadly *imago dei* deficit.

If Christ constitutes the representative *imago dei*, and the *essentia dei*, then man was originally created to be like Jesus. Adam was not primarily created to be like Jesus physically, because Christ’s appearance was actually *imago humani*. Mankind was created primarily to reflect, or image, the righteousness of Christ. When Christ was born of a virgin, He took on the physical form and physical frailties of the post-Fall Adam rather than the pre-Fall. However, in virtually every other way, he would have been like the pre-Fall Adam. Most especially He would have retained the original *imago dei* righteousness—being without sin.

¹³⁹Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 103.

Several exceptions are plainly evident when comparing the first Adam and the second. Christ had no Eve, neither did He procreate, neither did He manifest dominion over the earth in a human sense (though He did occasionally manifest His ability to do so in a Divine sense). If the *imago Christi* represents the most important aspects of the *imago dei* for mankind, we must look beyond the male and female relationship, as well as the delegated dominion over the created biosphere, for primary comparisons.

“A certain shift has taken place in Christian theology. Earlier theologians said that the image of God in man was to be found primarily in his structural capacities (his possession of reason, morality, and the like), whereas his functioning was thought of as a kind of appendix to his structure. More recent theologians, however, have affirmed that the functioning of man (his worshipping, serving, loving, ruling etc.) constitutes the essence of the image of God. The danger involved in the latter view is the temptation to think of the image *only* in terms of function—a conception just as one-sided as that which sees image only in terms of structure.”¹⁴⁰

The most prominent example of this more recent view is found in the Neo-Orthodox proposal of Karl Barth. Barth argues not for an *analogia entis*, but for an *analogia relationis*. This results in an exclusive interpretation of the *imago dei* concept as being found in the *I—Thou and Us—Our*’ relationship functions of humanity. The expression, Let *us* make man in *our* image finds an exclusive analogy in the *us* and *our* of the male and female relationship.

¹⁴⁰Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 69.

G. C. Berkouwer, in summarizing Barth's position states, "This is the tertium comparationis, we have been seeking, and this is God's image and likeness in man. We need seek no further for additional analogies in which to find the real meaning and content of the image of God."¹⁴¹

Barth also argues that, "The being of God cannot be compared with that of man."¹⁴² "It (the *imago dei*) is not a quality of man . . . It does not consist in anything that man is . . ."¹⁴³ "Though previous theologians spent a great deal of time trying to locate the exact structures and qualities in man in which the image of God consists, Barth concludes, they were all mistaken in looking there."¹⁴⁴

It is obvious that man is not God, and can never be God. However, the primary premise of this paper is that an analogia entis between God and humanity can and should be drawn. The ground for this analogy is based on the concept of mankind's character and nature. Scripture states that, "God created man upright, but they have sought out many devises" (Eccl7:29). "and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness (dikaiosyne) and holiness (hosiotes) of the truth" (Eph 4:24). These texts, as well as others, imply that man was originally created with the principles of God's law (and accompanying character attributes) inscribed upon the heart—with an inner, natural disposition toward holiness and piety. Unfortunately Neo-Orthodoxy falls short in its conclusions on this count as well.

¹⁴¹Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 72.

¹⁴²Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.2 The Doctrine of Creation*, 220.

¹⁴³Ibid., 184.

¹⁴⁴Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 49.

“Bultmann’s and Barth’s distrust of the ethics of character is bound up with their general distrust of ethics itself Both have a tendency to associate the very concept of ethics with man’s attempt to justify himself before God This negative attitude toward any ethic is but the expression of Bultmann’s and Barth’s commitment to the priority of God’s action in the divine human encounter.”¹⁴⁵ For Bultmann, “The notion of man’s possible moral development to higher stages was absolutely foreign to him.”¹⁴⁶

For our purposes, we shall ascribe to a wholistic view of the imago dei, encompassing both form *and* function. When we examine biblical soteriology, and its emphasis on restoring the imago dei, it is the inner moral essence of humanity, which must take precedence. Christian behavior and function must proceed from a Christ-like character restored, or such function loses its validity and significance. There is a need for a shift back to the more traditional emphasis in Christian anthropology, without denying the functional expressions of relationship and dominion.

“Man does not simply bear or *have* the image of God; he *is* the image of God. From the doctrine that man has been created in the image of God flows the clear implication that that image extends to man in his entirety.”¹⁴⁷

In this regard, my thinking follows to a large extent the thoughts of John Wesley: It is clear from what has been said that to Wesley perfection is not only perfection in actual acts; it embraces as well the whole disposition, which lies behind them, the soul with all its tempers. He sees perfection in obedience too, but this is an expression of the inward perfection of the individual personality or character... Thus to Wesley perfection means the perfected and harmonious personality.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 132.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 595-6.

¹⁴⁸Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 84-85.

Wesley's important theological themes such as original sin, prevenient grace, justification, and sanctification have the *imago dei* as their axil theme. For Wesley, salvation is defined as the restoration of the image of God. With the concept of the *imago dei*, Wesley expounds his typical order of salvation—creation, the Fall, and restoration. Wesley explained his concept of the *imago dei* from three aspects, namely, the natural, political, and moral images of God... For Wesley, the moral image is the principle image of God. It reflects the very righteousness and holiness of God.¹⁴⁹

If God is by nature love; is it not unreasonable to conclude that mankind in their original character, by their very nature, in the essence of their being, were also love. Though a partial reflection of, a very meager spark of, an infinitesimally small portion of, the fullness of God's love; yet, beings of love nonetheless—persons who reflected the essence of the God of love.

If these persons possessed perfect Christ-likeness of character, would they not exhibit an *analogia entis* of love, leading them to naturally fulfill the law of love toward God and their fellow man? Humanity was created to exercise functions that mirror the functions of God. Some of these expressions include creativity and pro-creativity, lordship over creation, and the capacity for an eternally intimate "I Thou" relationship that mirrors the relationship within the Trinity—and, that which God has with man. Yet the foundational constituent of the *imago dei* must lie within the very ontological essence of mankind, within humankind's essential structure, nature, and character. The functional expressions of humanity may mirror similar expressions proceeding from the person of God, but they do not reflect the fundamental essence; or character of God. It is this ontological essence, which most fully constitutes the *imago dei*.

¹⁴⁹Young Taek Kim, *John Wesley's Anthropology: Restoration of the Imago Dei as a Framework for Wesley's Theology* (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 2006), 1.

“It is true that Genesis 1:26 does indicate that man . . . is intended for a unique status and task in the created world (his dominium). But this does not imply that the content of the image of God should be sought in this lordship”¹⁵⁰

Barth is “right in pointing to the unique importance of the man-woman relation in creation; but he is wrong in further concluding that this relation is the specific content of the image of God, and all the more so in that other scriptural declarations concerning the image make no direct reference to this relation.”¹⁵¹

“Adam and Eve were created in the image of God by sharing in the communicable attributes of God. God’s relationship with them meant that God imparted Himself to them through His presence in and with them, and the impartation of His attributes. It is these attributes that formed their character and made them to be who they were.”¹⁵²

Scripture states that God *is* love. He likewise created mankind to *be* love, not in the Divine primary sense, but in a secondary, *imago dei* sense. John Wesley stated that the entire law of love was originally written on man’s heart.¹⁵³ God expresses acts of love, while also being in essence love—the very nature of God’s being is definitively love. Moreover, we are further informed that we are able to know what this defining character quality is, by God’s defining act of love—the cross.

¹⁵⁰Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 71.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 74.

¹⁵²Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Creation, Christ, Salvation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012), 91.

¹⁵³John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 5:54.

"If therefore, we wish to know what the image of God in man is really like, we must first look at Christ. This means, among other things, that what is central in the image of God is not such matters as reason or intelligence but rather love, since what stands out more than anything else in the life of Christ is His amazing love. In Christ, in other words, we see clearly what is hidden in Genesis 1: namely, what man as the perfect image of God should be like."¹⁵⁴

It was the Christ-like character of Adam that constituted the essential *imago dei*. This spiritual character constituent was what made the incarnate Christ (the second Adam) the perfect representative man. He was at once the fullness of God dwelling in human form—but also the fullness of the *imago dei* in His humanity.

The second aspect of this examination of Biblical anthropology has to do with the Fall of man. The perennial question that theologians have asked is, "just how far did man fall?" What aspects of the *imago dei* are retained if any, and what constituents were damaged beyond repair, or even obliterated? Barth argues that the image was not lost as a result of the Fall. Calvin is famous for developing what was subsequently termed the Reformed doctrine of total depravity. Contrary to common misconceptions, most of those holding some form of this reformed theological view (including Armenians and Wesleyans) do not conclude that the *imago dei* has become totally obliterated.

Though Calvin seems to literally at times advocate this position, in his commentary on Genesis he refers to the *imago dei* as having been obliterated;¹⁵⁵ in other places he refers to there being a remnant of the image left.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 73.

¹⁵⁵Calvin on Genesis 3:1.

¹⁵⁶Calvin on Genesis 9:6.

Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9 indicate that fallen man should still be regarded in some sense as the *imago dei*. Romans 2:15 also states that those without knowledge of God's law can do instinctively the things of the Law and can even show the work of the Law written in their hearts. Such innate attributes and capacities reflect a grievously marred remnant of the original *imago dei* (approaching toward, but not as yet obliterated) which has become spiritually mature (with the help of preventer grace and Divine intervention) in persons responsive to the vivifying and empowering influence of the Holy Spirit. This is despite the fact that they lack a scriptural revelation from God.

Based on these texts, there is disagreement with the 'Middle Orthodox' approach as set forth by Berkouwer, "Berkouwer's distinction between man's continuing humanity (which persists after the Fall) and the image of God (which according to him, was wholly lost in the Fall) implies that the image of God is somehow separable from man's essence . . . in Berkouwer's view, the image of God is so nonessential to human existence that man can still be man without it."¹⁵⁷

If humans are utterly unable to respond to God because they no longer bear the image of God [having been not only damaged, but destroyed], then the work of the Creator-Redeemer to win humans to salvation would be an utter waste of time. The fact that humans retain the image of God, though damaged, is important to our understanding of the doctrine of salvation . . . Freedom of choice by fallen humans must be understood as possible within a relationship with God. Humans don't need the help of God to disobey... However humans always need God's help to obey. Put differently, disobedience issues from a broken relationship with God, while obedience is a relational act with God's help.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 65.

¹⁵⁸Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Creation, Christ, Salvation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012), 94, 135.

Man is a unified whole, and the Fall affected his whole being. Thus, if the *imago dei* constituted the entire being of man at creation, then the entire image was defaced with the advent of sin. There is no aspect, constitution, character quality, relationship, or function of man that has not been affected by sin.

Every aspect of man's entire being has been marred. The endowments given originally to man are the source from which the expressions of life flow. The most important of these endowments were the spiritual and moral ones. These are those that lie at the heart of what constitutes the *imago dei*. These are the attributes, which God promises to restore through the salvation process. Without these fundamental constituents, God could not have pronounced the first man good in the truest sense. Man's original righteousness, his innate love for righteousness and embodiment of it, mirrored God's righteousness and holiness. Man was originally righteous and holy by nature. Possessing a character like God's Adam and Eve exhibited Christ-like love in their relationship with God and with each other.

Finally we need to examine the biblical concept of the soteriological restoration of the *imago dei*. "We do wish to emphasize the importance of the Biblical witness to Christ as the image of God and to the renewal, in communion with Christ, of man according to that image."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 98.

“Anyone who notes and are impressed by the biblical statements about Christ as the image of God would certainly hesitate to speak of the believer as also renewed after God’s image, if scripture itself did not so emphatically lead us in this direction. Do we not read, “whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom 8:29).¹⁶⁰

“Such words, being like Him have at various times in the history of the Church and of theology have been watered down, as a reaction against the deification of man.”¹⁶¹

There has been a resulting effort, particularly among the Neo-Orthodox, to eschew any support for an *imago entis*. We certainly empathize with the concerted effort of the Reformers to distance themselves from anything faintly resembling salvation by works, or the so called divination of man. However, it is entirely likely that the Reformed theological pendulum proceeded too far in the opposing direction, heading toward extreme theological positions. The Neo-Orthodox appears to have taken this swing even further, outside the anthropological and soteriological confines of scripture.

“In terms of Barth’s definition of the image of God we must conclude that the image of God is not really capable of renewal. For the image is defined in purely formal terms: the ability to exist in confrontation with God and others; the capacity of hearing God as a *thou* and responding to him as an *I*, and the capacity of doing the same with his fellow human beings. But if this capacity is an ineradicable aspect of man, and if it is understood as a mere capacity or ability as such, regardless of how it is used, one fails to see how it can be subject to improvement, renewal, or transformation.”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 109.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 104.

¹⁶²Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 51.

“Further, Barth’s denial of the historical Fall and his understanding of the image of God as purely relational make it impossible for him to recognize the devastating effects of the Fall on the image of God and the need for the renewal of the image of God in the redemptive process. In these respects Barth’s conception of the image of God falls far short of the Biblical doctrine of man.”¹⁶³

It is very difficult to argue that humanity is called to imitate Christ (a theme throughout the New Testament) unless those aspiring to *imitatio Christi* experience the new birth and become new creatures. The only way to express true obedience is from the heart. The intent of the New Covenant is to give man a new heart—to inscribe upon the fleshly tables of this new heart the precepts of the Divine law with a resulting character reformation. “It is a change of form, a metamorphosis, which affects the depths of man’s whole existence, and which therefore becomes manifest in his whole existence.”¹⁶⁴ The fallen nature will not be completely erased until glorification at Christ’s return. The process of sanctification renews within consecrated humans a Christ-like character, which united with the Holy Spirit, imparts the ability to overcome the sinful nature daily. This re-creative process begins at the new birth and is consummated at the coming of Christ when we shall know even as we are known. Then we shall be enabled, through a complete deliverance from sin, to behold (experientially) the image of God in Christ perfectly.

¹⁶³Ibid., 52.

¹⁶⁴Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 113.

We have reviewed some of the most important theological issues surrounding the nature and salvation of mankind. The intent was to emphasize an understanding that harmonizes with and adheres to a grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture. Neo-Orthodox interpretive schemes have done much to shed light on neglected facets of biblical anthropology—however, when they abandon a historical faith in the historicity of man’s origins, nature, and dilemma; they risk also drifting from the biblical prescriptions that can most fully restore fallen man. We dare not reject a belief in the original moral perfection of a real historical Adam—neither the biblical and historical realities of a very real and wholistic moral Fall. Such a complete moral Fall left mankind in need of a very real restoration to the original relationship and condition that was lost. This is the true goal of Christianity and can only be accomplished through the grace of God and Divine intervention. Any other confused or lesser understanding of the nature of man, and God’s resulting soteriological goal for man, does an injustice to God’s revealed will and purpose for humanity.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Incarceration in the United States is often referred to as the highest in the world. If incarceration is to be reduced in the United States, any viable solution must contain reaching those at risk prior to incarceration and working closely with those who are on parole.

It has been documented that the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ has provided marginal results toward long-term transformation. In fact, men who are incarcerated have more time to engage in Christian practices than those who are on the outside; still the results are often ineffective.

The intent of this work is to focus on one of the most important goals of Christian discipleship—the restoration of the image of God (Christ) in men; and a novel (yet highly biblical) approach to facilitating that goal. It is my prayer that this work will spur others to explore similar means of assisting God in transforming those in greatest need.

Hypothesis

If incarcerated Christians are exposed to transformative biblical texts in a variety of ways (exegeting the text, preaching the text, practicing the principles found within the text, journaling and group feedback related to the subject of the text) with a strong emphasis on critical self-reflection and personal application—there will be a resultant potential for spiritual growth and character development.

Ministry Program

The ministry program began with the context associate passing out a letter of invitation and a letter of intent. After a brief summary of the proposed program experience—a letter of informed consent was circulated and read aloud. Potential participants were told they could voluntarily sign the consent form if they wished to participate in the class.

The introductory session consisted of a lesson on preaching from the work of Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching*.¹⁶⁵ The focus of this teaching was personal discipleship, spiritual formation, and character development. An application of the primary lesson to the audience was made. The total class would contain four sessions lasting two hours in length. The actual sermonic sessions would have a maximum time limit of ten minutes.

During the second session the students engaged in an integrative application of their given Old Testament texts.

- Student A —Psalm 51
- Student B—Job 19
- Student C—Judges 16

At the conclusion of each sermon, students were evaluated and critiqued.

During the third session students were given a New Testament text to grapple with, developing the meaning and application of the text.

¹⁶⁵Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

- Student A—John 3:3-5
- Student B—John 20
- Student C—Mark 5

The final session included a post-test assessment and intensive interview.

Research Methods

The research in question will be conducted in a proactive educational environment. The program experience will work proactively toward a transformational goal. The researcher will not only function as the teacher/spiritual facilitator of a formative process; he will also be a participant in the transformative educational process. A methodological form of triangulation using a variety of research methods will be utilized toward the goal of qualitative validity and case study. Both participant, and participant observer journals would be kept. A pre-test and post-test of open-ended questions was administered to participants with the goal of fostering further critical self-reflection and ascertaining the quality of change occurring. Participant observations were also a part of the data collected. Focus group discussion was utilized. Finally there will be transcription of in-depth personal interviews. Because of the nature of the prison environment a high degree of anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained—especially with the in-depth personal interviews. Participants will be assigned alphabetical designations for the purpose of maintaining anonymity.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

After being informed that this project was rejected by the Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC) of the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (DR&C), I was significantly discouraged. A period of serious reflection ensued as to whether the project would ever be completed; and whether the doctoral program could be finished. The complexities of HSRC's demands, as well as the lack of assurance that meeting such demands would ever be sufficient for approval, were devastating. The process of seeking an alternative venue was prolonged and difficult.

Once the process of conducting the project was finally underway—a meaningful experience began to develop among the participants. The men who engaged in their individual preparations and preaching were very excited about the experience. As they progressed into the second sermon preparation and presentation they gained confidence, not only in their speaking ability, but in their spiritual capabilities and future as well. Though acting as a researcher, I was also caught up in their enthusiasm. Having almost lost hope regarding the future of this project—I was confronted with the prospect of project completion—as well as participants who genuinely benefited from the experience in ways that were definitely transformative.

It seemed that providence was at work actively in providing this venue, along with bringing the project to fruition. The context associate had a Wesleyan background and was sympathetic to the theological underpinnings of the project.

As previously mentioned, I originally anticipated working with inmates in the institution in which I am employed. Under those circumstances, many of the students would have been personal acquaintances of which I had developed close relationships. Many of the students would also have been those whom I had ministered to in a variety of ways. Within this new context, the participants and I were strangers to one another on the opening night of the program. It is entirely possible that this unforeseen consequence would contribute to minimizing any "favorable" research results that would develop as a result of participants (with a favorable relationship with the researcher) wanting to please or help the chaplain. Likewise, the context associate (chaplain at SEORJ) had no prior acquaintance that could potentially prejudice his response.

The new context associate circulated a letter of invitation and intent. Initially, a positive response of twelve volunteers expressed interest in the program. There were a total of seven men who arrived with interest to participate on the opening evening. The project began with introductions between the researcher and prospective participants. After a brief summary of the proposed program experience, a letter of informed consent was circulated and read aloud.

One man found the consent disclaimer to be prohibitive and declined to participate. It should be noted that the consent document was designed to meet the highest standards the Department of Corrections could possibly demand.

The Human Subjects Research Committee expressed no concerns about this document or consent issues resulting from it. Six potential participants remained, with one declining to participate by the end of the introductory session.

This would leave five potential participants by the close of the first session. Also, due to the high turnover among this typical jail population, by the evening of the second session, only three participants remained to complete the program. This was significantly below the numerical expectations for a statistically significant study. However, by the end of the program, it became evident that a small class size was conducive to openness, comradery, and learning among the participants. What it lacked in statistical significance, it made up for in meaningful learning, open dialogue, and productive teacher/student interaction.

Researchers have found a general increase in achievement when a class is fewer than twenty students. The results are better for students in the early grades, as well as minority or impaired students. The benefit decreases as the students grow to adulthood. However, adult offenders have more developmental and educational needs than the general population. Also, the logistics of this particular class required more interpersonal interaction than a traditional classroom program.

A recent National Educational Policy Center Brief states, "This policy brief summarizes the academic literature on the impact of class size and finds that class size is an important determinant of a variety of student outcomes, ranging from test scores to broader life outcomes. Smaller classes are particularly effective at raising achievement levels of low-income and minority children. Policymakers should carefully weigh the efficacy of class-size policy against other potential uses of funds.

While lower class size has a demonstrable cost, it may prove the more cost-effective policy overall”¹⁶⁶ (see also copious supportive research available at: classsizematters.org).

The introductory session of the project class comprised intensive instruction in preparation for the “preaching event.” The paradigm of preaching as a witness event, as set forth by Thomas Long in “The Witness of Preaching,”¹⁶⁷ was utilized as a major emphasis for the participants preaching. A specific focus on the importance of personal discipleship and character development—as opposed to “preaching skills”—was dominant. The researcher emphasized several biblical texts that focused on the kind of “raw material” that God was looking for in his preacher/witnesses. A repeated theme was that the apostles were no different than these men when they were called to follow Jesus—and even though uncultured, uneducated, and marginalized by society, they would eventually turn the world upside down. The key was their willingness to give their all to Christ. One quote appreciated by the students was memorable. “Well, I have not many great talents, and the only secret I know is that whatever I was, Jesus had all there was of me” (William Booth).

A brief history of the origins of preaching being traced to the Synagogue Service and the exposition of the biblical text was given. A simplified expository method from John R. W. Stott’s *Between Two Worlds*¹⁶⁸ was partially adapted. The acronym O.T.T.O.—Observation, Truths, Theme, Outline (origin unknown)—was also utilized.

¹⁶⁶D. W. Schanzenbach, *Does Class Size Matter?* (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, 2014).

¹⁶⁷Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

¹⁶⁸John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 211-216.

The texts chosen were all narrative in nature, chronicling transformative spiritual experiences in Bible characters. The sermon development comprised studying the text, context, and biography (observation); gleaning multiple truths and lessons (truths); isolating one dominant thought/theme/lesson (theme); constructing an outline for the sermonic journey (outline)—then preaching the sermon as primarily narrative, with emphasis on the dominant theme. The narrative would include both biblical story, as well as personal testimony, with a close personal application of the text. Finally, an application of the primary lesson to the audience was made. Maximum time for each sermon was set at ten minutes. Each of the four project sessions was approximately two hours in length.

At the end of the first introductory/instructional session the participants drew a random narrative text from a group of Old Testament texts. Their second sermon would be chosen from representative New Testament texts. They were also given large-print Bibles, access to Bible commentaries, and handouts outlining guidelines for Biblical interpretation and the expository/narrative method taught.

During the second session the participants returned (minus two releasees) to begin preaching practice. The participants were very enthused about the prospective preaching events but learned quickly that public speaking is not as easy as it looks. However, I was surprised to witness all three students engage in integrative application of their given texts. Student A received Psalm 51 with the backstory of David's sin and repentance. Student B was given Job 19 as containing Job's messianic declaration in the midst of his great trial. Student C drew Judges 16, the story of Samson's fall and final victory.

For example, Student C applied the story of Samson's "woman troubles" to his own—and his need to avoid destructive relationships in the future.

Following the preaching efforts, the co-participants, the context associate, and I critiqued the men. An evaluation form, which was given to the participants at the first session as a guide to be used in sermon preparation was completed. During the third session (second preaching event) the participants made dramatic progress in the ease with which they spoke, and the meaningfulness of their interpretation and application of the text. This was a very assuring and encouraging experience for the participants. Student A received John 3:3-5 as his text, the midnight dialogue with Nicodemus and Christ, containing the great gospel declaration. Student B received the story of Doubting Thomas found in John 20. Student C received the story of the demoniac from Mark 5.

As an example, Student B proclaimed that his distinct spiritual problem prior to his present incarceration was disbelief and unbelief—always questioning God's presence, promise, and power. The close application, and providential reception of this text in John chapter 3, caused Student B to become emotional.

A fourth and final session convened one week after the final preaching sessions. During this gathering, a post-test was administered, followed by in-depth personal interviews, and finally a group exit discussion. At the close of this event the participants were disappointed that the classes were ending and requested for the experience to continue. The context associate also made this request and offered to continue to assist with jail supervision. I agreed to return on a weekly basis and gave the three participants new Bible texts for further sermon preparation.

As mentioned previously, In general, Kohlberg's theory of moral development can be simplified into three major stages of human progress. "Within these major levels, then, it appears that one might describe three predictable epochs in a life cycle that moved continuously and successfully toward maturing characteristics. They could be characterized as egocentric (self is assumed to be authority), heterocentric (authority is recognized as external to the self), and logocentric (authority is incorporated into self as principle from outside, having become internal)."¹⁶⁹ Thus, when looking for spiritual development (particularly within a population of felons) we would most specifically be looking for an integrative source of authority where in biblical terms "the law is written on the heart." It was significant that much of the transformative learning experienced by the participants appeared to be of a logocentric and transcendent nature.

The two primary sources for analyzing data from this research project are:

Firstly: Mezirow's four critical categories for determining whether transformative learning has occurred. These categories as enumerated by Mezirow are as follows:

6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹Joy, *Moral Development Foundations*, 25.

¹⁷⁰J. Mezirow & Associates (2000). *Learning as Transformation* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

The data gathered from participants was given these numerical designations when appropriate (see Post & Pre-Test Survey, Personal Interview and Group Discussion documents).

Secondly: Character attributes (with supporting biblical texts) from Peterson's *Character Strengths and Virtues*¹⁷¹ were applied. This major work on character virtues develops its research as a complement to the DSM-IV—seeking to emphasize and examine what is virtuous about human behavior and personality, as opposed to humanity's unhealthy aberrations. These character descriptions are found in the appendix document entitled, "Character Attributes w/Biblical References." Alphabetical designations were adopted for each of these major categories and attributed (likewise) to the triune source of gathered participant data.

In analyzing the pre- and post-test data, it became evident that each of the participants had previous Christian experience. This was to be expected; persons aspiring to preach would probably not be unchurched. In question three, however, there was a distinct move toward a specific God-centered focus. Apparently the program helped them to become more intentionally aware of and focused on God. Change was not as evident when looking exclusively at the pre- and post-test data. However, when the personal interviews and group discussion were added into the equation, there was dramatic evidence of transformative change. Each of the participants expressed clear and forceful statements regarding spiritual and character-related change.

¹⁷¹Christopher Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues* (Washington D.C.: Oxford University Press, 2004).

When analyzing the total categories of transformative and character qualities there were many more manifestations than originally expected. There were wide-ranging expressions reaching the entire gamut of attributes and qualities. No participant showed any peculiar deficits. Each participant manifested a sincere and genuine progress in spiritual knowledge and motivation toward acquiring Christian attributes and shedding sinful habits and character qualities.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

The proverbial question asked at the completion of a project is, "What would you have done differently, if anything?" The primary answer to this question would involve the issues revolving around the context initially chosen, and the problems that resulted from that choice. Potential answers to this question would contain the following:

1. More fully research the potential expectations and demands of the HSRC at the beginning of the doctoral program. The researcher did not even become fully aware of the existence of this committee until the end of phase IV, resulting in much stress and concern.
2. With earlier dialogue and knowledge of the HSRC's workings, then this researcher would probably have chosen a different context, at an earlier juncture, thus sparing many difficulties.
3. Of course, one other option would have been to try to meet all of the evolving expectations of the HSRC in the search to become that committee's first approved D.Min. research project.

Regarding the actual implementation of the project, it would be good to follow the advice of the context associate and extend the total time and number of project sessions, as well as engaging in more coaching of the participants. Due to the inordinately prolonged process of securing a new context (and impending deadlines), the actual program was significantly compressed compared with the originally intended approach.

One of the first things to do moving forward is conducting the original extended version of the project within the original context (SCC-L). There will now be no departmental prohibitions placed on such an event, since it will not be conducted as "research" with data collected or participants treated as subjects; nor will any findings from this additional event be preserved for publication. However, it is the intent to make mention of the general experience and effects of this prison program. There are a significant number of men who were notified of the course previously at SCC-L, and who have periodically inquired as to its status. I am convinced that the reception will be enthusiastic and the effect transformative.

Indeed, as of the final writing of this document a successful program within the original prison context has been conducted. The reception was enthusiastic and the result transformative. The experience of the participants was often dramatically expressive and deeply meaningful—especially when the biblical story converged providentially with the preacher's story.

Though it may be too much to think that great change could be effected in the course of one relatively brief Christian program, if spiritual transformation is to be facilitated, it is likely to occur through the combined agency of the Bible and the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures themselves declare themselves to be a medium for this process, in unison with the Holy Spirit (2 Pt1: 3-7). This is why these influences were sought intentionally and practically in the course of this final project. Through exposure to the exegesis, proclamation, application, admonition, and the discussion of various transformation centered biblical texts—growth in character could be facilitated. The crucible of the preaching event, and the peer critique which follows, can be a singular

moment for learning. Couple this with an intentional focus on the preparation of the preacher, rather than the sermon—and there should, and can be, significant potential for progress toward transformative Christian character development.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

The project you are preparing to participate in is a course with an emphasis on biblical preaching and character development. Should you choose to participate, you will be expected to maintain attendance, keep a personal journal, study selected Bible texts and preach from those texts, receive and give relevant critique regarding the principles found in the sermons and how they are preached and experienced. You will be encouraged to participate in group discussions. Certain randomly selected volunteers will also be asked to participate in an in-depth personal interview. Your participation is purely voluntary. You are always free to drop out of the course at any time if you so choose, without any penalty.

This program may involve potential risks or discomfort. There is a remote risk that your personal information could be revealed to unwanted persons. At all times there will be an intentional effort made to preserve your complete anonymity. All participants will be asked to sign this confidentiality contract to keep all personal information within the confines of the classroom experience. At no time will your name or number be recorded or published as part of this research project. Though you may be expected to hand in a personal journal, any portion of your writing that could potentially reveal your identity will not be revealed to others. Should you participate in an in-depth personal interview, your identity will not be attached to the information conveyed in that interview—neither will information that could reveal your identity be published for public review.

In the process of sermon delivery and critique, you may potentially experience discomfort. Public speaking can be a fearful or embarrassing experience. Receiving criticism from your peers regarding your presentation (or your behavior in general) may be a difficult experience. The facilitator of this project (the chaplain) will do everything to minimize any negative aspects of your experience. Participants will not be allowed to make personal attacks on other participants, or in any way belittle them. An intentional effort will be made to foster an environment of "constructive criticism" tempered with positive reinforcement.

Some of the potential benefits of this project include the following: you may receive increased confidence and ability in public speaking and biblical preaching. Your participation in this program may also result in spiritual growth and personal improvement. You may experience a deeper understanding of yourself and others within the context of the Christian faith. Finally, your understanding of the Bible and its interpretation may be increased.

In signing this document you are agreeing that you understand the above statements, and that you agree to maintain confidentiality regarding the personal information that is shared during the course of this program. You agree to not discuss the personal statements or information revealed during this program with anyone but a participant in this program.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Program Facilitator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B
PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

Q1: What do you (did you get) want to get out of this course?

Student A:

Pre: Closer to God spiritually. (6,9) (F)

Post: How to better understand the bible scriptures (7) (A)

Student B:

Pre: Spirituality. Better life with God. To be able to help others become right with God. (6,7,9,10) (C,F)

Post: This class has brought me closer to God. It's helped me realize that I want to continue helping God by sharing his word with others. AMEN!! (9,10) (C,D,F)

Student C:

Pre: Learn more about God/Jesus, The Bible and help my preaching skills. I want to be able to speak with others in a way that will catch their mind and heart. (6,9,10)

Post: I learned a lot more about my life. I learned I should only live my life through Jesus. I learned how to change others' lives by preaching the Word. (7,9) (A,C,D,F)

Q2: If I you had the power to improve one thing in your life it would be . . .

Student A:

Pre: Racism. (9,10) (C,D)

Post: Never drink again. (6, 10) (E)

Student B:

Pre: Better understanding of God's Word so that I can make it into heaven. (6,7,10) (A,F)

Post: For better understanding and to continue walking with the Lord. (9) (A,E,F)

Student C:

Pre: My prayer skills. (7,9) (F)

Post: The power to touch people's souls in a very special way. (6) (C)

Q3: The most important thing in your life is ...

Student A:

Pre: My children. (C)

Post: God. (9) (F)

Student B:

Pre: Being right with God and my family. (6,9) (C,D,F)

Post: The most important thing in my life is Jesus. (9) (F)

Student C:

Pre: God and my family. (9) (C,F)

Post: God. The Son of God. Jesus, and my loving family. (9) (C,F)

Q4: How would you describe a mature Christian?

Student A:

Pre: Humble servant of the Lord. (9) (C,F)

Post: A God-fearing person. (F)

Student B:

Pre: Someone who can sit and help others understand God's Word and why it is important to follow his Word. (9) (C,F)

Post: Someone who continues to share the Lord's word and pray even if you pray every second of the day continue to have faith in Jesus no matter the trials and tribulations. (10) (B,C,F)

Student C:

Pre: Someone who can sit and tell you about Jesus and goes by the book of the Lord. (7,9) (C,F)

Post: Someone who has been through a lot of pain, mistakes, and corrected it all with God being placed in their life. (6) (E,F)

Q5: What is the goal of Christianity?**Student A:**

Pre: Eternal salvation (F)

Post: To honor, obey, and love the Lord (fellowship). (C,D,F)

Student B:

Pre: Eternal salvation (F)

Post: Share the Lord's Word and helping others. (C,F)

Student C:

Pre: Make it to the kingdom of the Lord. (F)

Post: Internal salvation. (F)

Q6: How would you define character?**Student A:**

Pre: Your belief system. (7) (F)

Post: Your character is based on your morals and standards. (7) (D)

Student B:

Pre: To treat others as God would treat me. (9) (C,D)

Post: Character is who you are; if you truly believe in the Lord then you will continue to share his Word. (7) (C,E,F)

Student C:

Pre: Treat others the way you plan on being treated. (9) (C,D)

Post: Being able to say no to sin and evil ways and remembering what the Lord Jesus wants. (7) (E,F)

APPENDIX C
CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES/BIBLICAL REFERENCES

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES W/BIBLICAL REFERENCES

(Adapted from: Christopher Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004)

A. Wisdom and Knowledge—(2 Pt 1:5-6; Ti 1:8; Prv18:15)
Creativity (Originality, Ingenuity)

Curiosity (Interest, Novelty, Seeking, Openness to experience)

Open-Mindedness (Judgment, Critical Thinking)

Love of Learning

Perspective (Wisdom) (Jas 1:5; 3:17; Prv 3:13-18; Col 3:16)

B. Courage

Bravery (Valor) (Phil 1:28, 1 Cor16:13, 2 Tm1:7)

Persistence (Perseverance, Industriousness) (Rom 5:3, Heb10:36, Jas1:23)

Integrity (Authenticity, Honesty) (1 Pt 3:10-12, Phil 4:8-9, 2 Cor 4:2)

Vitality (Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy)

C. Humanity

Love (Jn 13:1; 15:13; 1 Cor 13:3, 1 Pt 1:22, Gal 5:22)

Kindness (Generosity, Nurturance, Cure, Compassion, Altruistic Love, 'Niceness') (Eph 4:32, 1 Pt 3:8; Gal 5:22) (Mt 14:14; Rom12:20, Gal6:2)

Social Intelligence (Emotional Intelligence, Personal Intelligence)

D. Justice

Citizenship (Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork) (Jn 15:12; Eph 5:1-2; 1 Jn 3:10) (Mt 5:9; Col 3:15; Phil 4:7, Gal 5:22) (Mt 17:19; 25:21; 1 Cor 12:9; Heb 11:1; 1 Thes 5:24, Gal 5:22)

Fairness (Matt.14:14; Luke 6:31)

Leadership

E. Temperance

Forgiveness and Mercy (Mt 6:14-15; Mk 11:25; Col 3:12-13; Mt 18:21-22)

Humility and Modesty, Prudence (Phil 2:3, Rom 12:16, Jas 4:10, 1 Pt 5:6)

Self-Regulation (Self Control) (2 Pt 1:5-7; 2 Cor 9:27; 2 Tm.1:2; Gal5:23)

F. Transcendence

Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder, Elevation)

Gratitude - (2 Cor 4:15-17, Col 3:17, 1 Thes 5:1) (Jas 1:2-3; Rom14:17, 15:13; Gal 5:22)

Hope (Optimism, Future Mindedness, Future Orientation) (Rom 5:2-7, 1 Pt 1:3-6)

Humor (Playfulness) Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose) (Prv 3:5; Eph 2:8; 6:16; 1 Jn 5:4; 1 Pt 1:7)

APPENDIX D
PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Was there anything that stands out from the Bible texts you studied?

(Student A) (6,7,9,10) (A,B,E,F)

John 3, being born again. So many people not living the new life, including me. I thought I'd go to heaven while I was drinking and sleeping with women. I was living the old life. I got this wake-up call, was I going to continue—I found out it was all or nothing.

The second text I had about David and what he did, how he wanted Bathsheba and sent her husband to die in battle. God forgives all—but you have to beg for forgiveness. Things we do can be forgiven, if we want to honestly change we can. I don't believe in telling war stories like most of the guys here, they glorify sin.

(Student B) (7,10) (A,F)

John 20 really relates a lot to my life. Over the years I was always a doubter. Always in and out of here. I was always asking for proof. But He is real. I know He is real. Since I have been in this class I have been brought closer and have a better understanding.

(Student C) (6,7,9,10) (D,E,F)

The text in Judges reminds me I can't be around certain people that will trick me. Maybe not the first or second time, but I'll end up getting tricked. I think about that a lot. With the text in Mark, I don't think I have a demon in me, but I definitely feel like I was living with a demon. It was definitely easier to commit sin than to do right, so they do demon things. Now being here I am able to push the demons out and to tell others how God helped me.

2. How did the experience of preaching affect you?

(Student A) (6,7,9,10) (A,D,F)

This made me want to talk and learn more. So much I want to be more involved—to get to know Jesus more. When I was doing it, learning new things, reading the commentaries, learning things I never knew. There's so much I don't know. I know I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It feels good to talk about Jesus Christ openly and freely. I know He's there for me at all times. I'm not a Preacher, but I can do some of the back work.

(Student B) (9,10) (A,B,F)

The first time it was rough. The second time it got a lot easier. I've always been afraid and embarrassed and nervous. It was much easier the second time, like the fear was gone, gone away. I was actually looking forward to it. I prayed for Him to guide me and help me better understand the Word. I believe He is doing that. I went to church here, I was praying and singing and not afraid to be heard. It was awesome, it was wonderful.

(Student C) (7,9,10) (B,D,F)

I definitely do not fear crowds. I used to fear no man or beast. Now it's way different, I have the fear of God. I used to fear heights until I worked as a roofer. I used to get up and talk in class. Preaching is very different. I do love it, I love it. I'll keep learning, keep talking to crowds. I could talk to 100 people. It doesn't matter what they think. 100 or one, all that matters is telling them about God.

3. Have you experienced any change in your life as a result of taking this course?

(Student A) (6,7,10) (E)

Yeah, I stopped talking about and having conversations about women and drugs. I don't want to indulge in any of that—though I still do gamble. I haven't started to quit that yet.

(Student B) (7,9,10) (B,C,F)

I'm not afraid to talk about the Lord to anyone else. I try to help others. What He has done and can do for us. This made it easier for me to be more open to talk to someone. I'm much happier. I used to think I can't do this. As long as I have the Lord, I can do this. I realize He's the answer.

(Student C) (6,7,9,10) (D,E,F)

Yes, tremendous. Every day I say multiple prayers—before this I never really prayed. My first week here I ended up getting in a fight. It's very hard to turn down a fight—with fifteen guys pressing you to fight. After that I have just been praying and talking to God. Something happened, now there are no altercations. I was into race, now I'm in here. I don't see color anymore. White pride tats don't faze me. I look at it as a joke. The more tattoos the darker their skin is. I fear God. I fear Jesus. That's it. That's what I live for. That's who I fear.

4. Is there anything you would like to change in the future?

(Student A) (6,7,9,10) (A,C,E)

I want to have a different thought process. I'm thinking of getting more schooling and going back to church and getting things back in order. I need to stay away from my old roommates and cousins. I don't even want to drink any more. When I was out it was like, "One more flip won't hurt me." No more. I need to get back with my kids. A lot of my kids came back into my life. One even cried on the phone when I was talking to her.

(Student B) (6,7,9,10) (A,B,C,F)

My way of thinking. The things I do. All the negativity. Going to church a lot. Always listening to preaching. Get enrolled in a church and stick with the Lord. Come out to places like this where people need help and guide them to the Lord. I want to get help for my brain trauma and thinking process. I want to get with the Lord and get right. I need to help my father. He has a rare disease and I need to be with him and take care of him. I need to get him and my mother to go with me to church, they just fell off the path.

(Student C) (6,9,10) (C,D)

I want to change my family's life. A lot of them need God in their life. Their life is okay and healthy, but it would be ten times better with God. My brother, he needs God big time. When I read Matthew 6:22-24 I think of him—about how you can't serve God and money. Before I got here I couldn't remember Bible verses. My brother is going into the professional sports draft. As far as being locked up in here, this is the longest we have been apart. He doesn't want to leave until I get out.

APPENDIX E
GROUP FOCUS DISCUSSION

GROUP FOCUS DISCUSSION

Q1: What has been your overall impression of this program?

- Taught a lot how to be closer to God and each other. (7) (A,F)
- Helped me have a little more patience. (9) (E)
- Showed us that a lot of stuff we overlooked. (7) (A)
- Helped us stay humble. (9) (E)
- Helped us work together in bad situations. (9) (C,D)

Q2: Is there anything you would like to share with the other students about how this program has affected you?

- It taught me to be more open and not to worry so much. (7) (C)
- I just want to help more, just do more for others. (6, 9, 10) (C)
- I want to do more worshipping. (6, 10) (F)
- I'm able to affect my family, to show them—in a video visit they say I don't sound like the same person at all. I don't want to be in trouble no more. I'm talking about God at least five or six times on the phone with my family. He's the reason I'm still breathing. (7,9,10) (C,F)

Q3: Is there anything you want to share about how you perceive this program affected any of your fellow students?

- Student C gets down. He's ready to get out on bond with a 50/50 chance but not yet, so there is frustration. I just want to let him know that it will work out. (C)
- I want to encourage student B that his health issues will get better. (C)
- We all go through our discouragements and frustrations. Not knowing what is going to happen with our cases. We need to stop using things as crutches. It's our own fault that we are in here, we can't blame someone else. (B,E)
- I want to pray more. We need to pray more—it helps, I know it helps. (6, 7, 9, 10) (F)
- In church there were many who put their hands up when asked "Who wants to preach?" But where are they now, they ain't here.

Q4: How could this program be improved?

- The course could be improved if it was held on a steady basis and lasted longer.

APPENDIX F
JAIL CONTEXT ASSOCIATE EXIT INTERVIEW

JAIL CONTEXT ASSOCIATE EXIT INTERVIEW**1. What has been your overall impression of this program?**

The program is very informative and done in an interesting format.

2. How did this program affect you personally?

I was able to collect ideas and thoughts that will improve my ministry.

3. What effect did you think the program had upon the students who participated? Do you think there was any change that took place in the participants? If so, what kind of change?

I could see the students were touched personally and applied what they were learning to their own lives. I saw changes in the participants. I think the project helped the participants see themselves in the light of the scriptures and will continue to give them wisdom.

4. How could this program be improved?

More coaching and trial sermons.

APPENDIX G
BIBLICAL PREACHING EVALUATION FORM

BIBLICAL PREACHING EVALUATION FORM

(1=least, 5=most)

1. Was this a Christ-centered message?

1 2 3 4 5

2. Was there a central idea or theme to the message?

1 2 3 4 5

3. Did the sermon bring out the meaning of the text?

1 2 3 4 5

4. Were the main points clear and simple to understand?

1 2 3 4 5

5. Did the conclusion wrap up the sermon in a powerful and unifying way?

1 2 3 4 5

6. Was there a direct application or appeal to the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

7. Was there an effective use of illustrations?

1 2 3 4 5

8. Did the preacher maintain eye contact with the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

9. Was the delivery enthusiastic and animated?

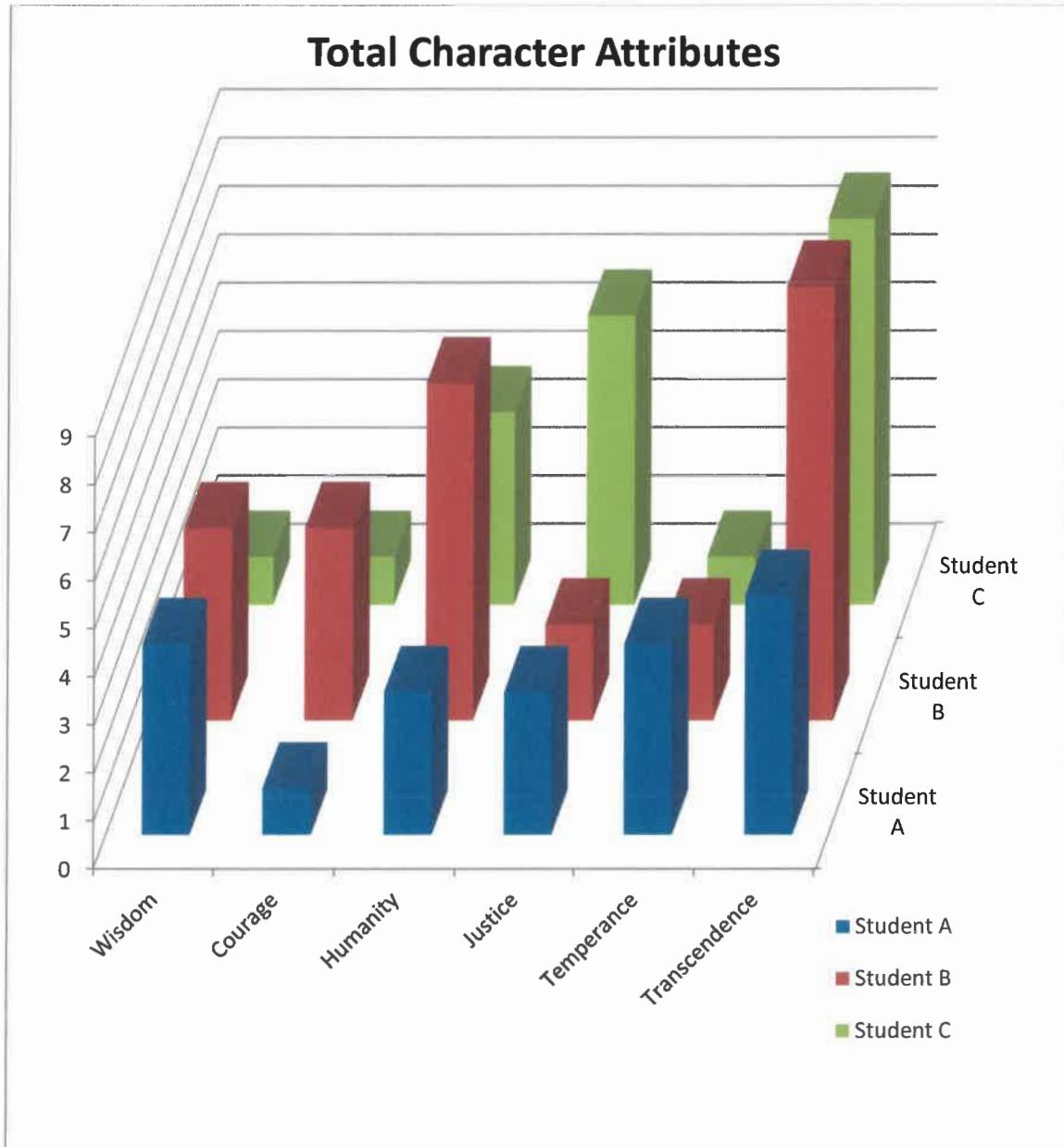
1 2 3 4 5

10. Was there an emphasis on Christian character?

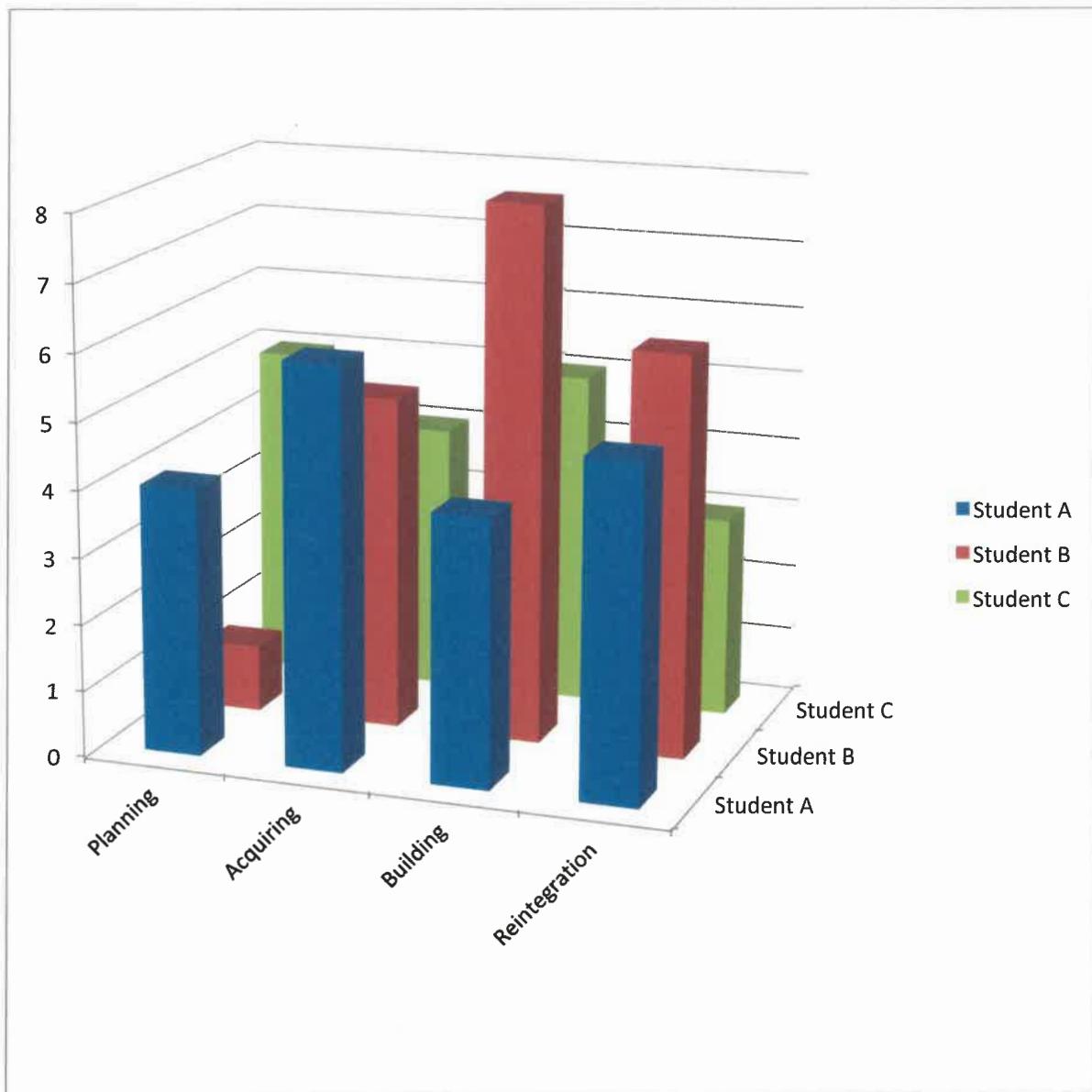
1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

APPENDIX H
TOTAL ATTRIBUTE CHARTS



Total Transformative Attributes



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